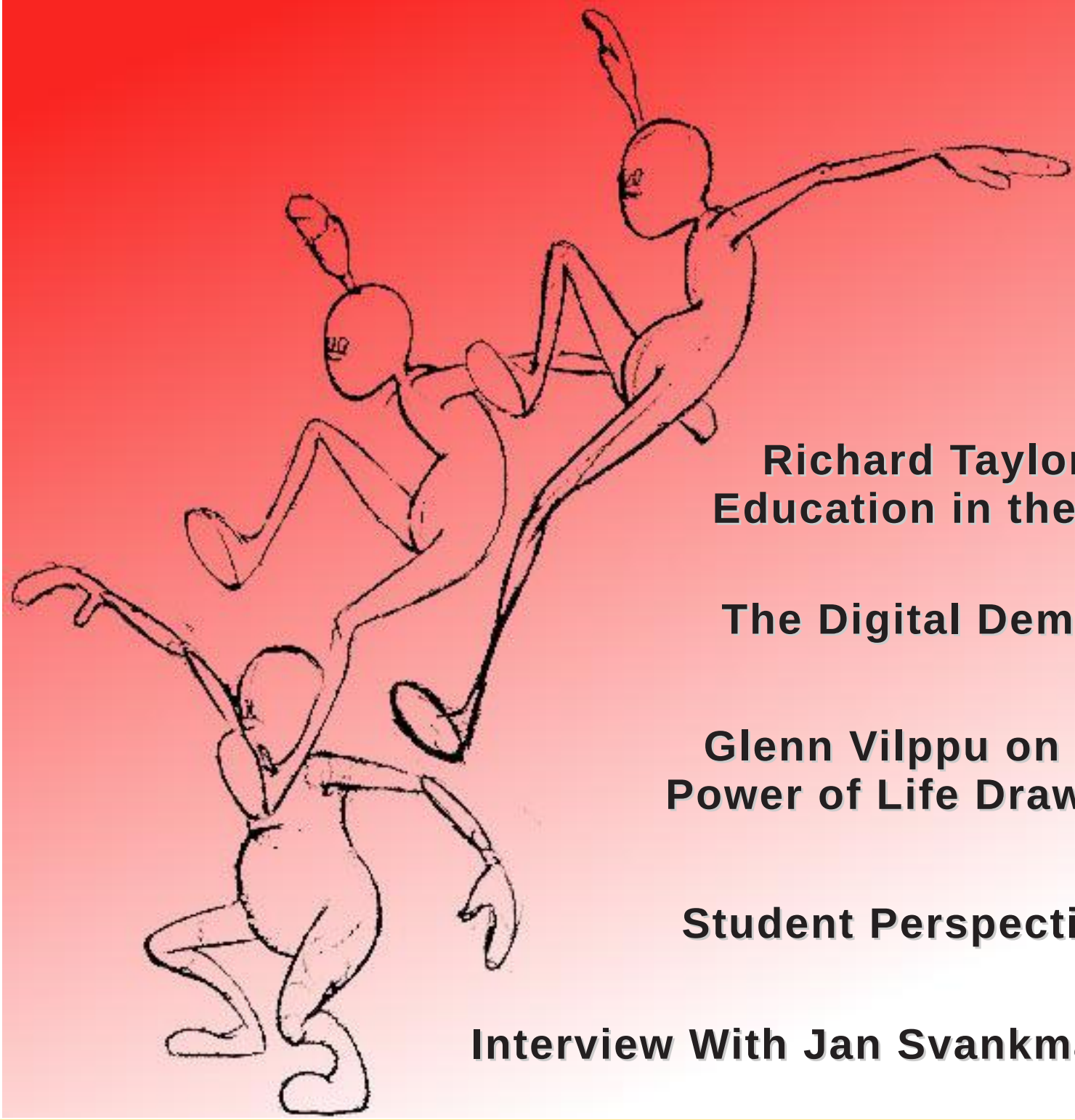
ANIMATION WORLD

June 1997 MAGAZINE Vol. 2 No. 3

Education & Training



Richard Taylor on Education in the UK

The Digital Demand

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Student Perspectives

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Cover: *Cover art compiled from drawings of Dawn Robertson of ACME Virtual Training Network.*

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EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Greetings From the New (Really New) Editor

by Heather Kenyon, Editor-in-Chief

First and foremost I would like to say how happy I am to be joining the Animation World Network family. I'd like to thank Ron Diamond and Dan Sarto for offering me this exciting opportunity. While I have only been here for a few weeks and still feel as though I am grasping at straws, I have already felt very welcomed by not only the in-house AWN team but also by their supporters around the world. The virtual network of people that I have been "introduced" to over the ether is amazing, and I am so looking forward to becoming a part of this community. I am also looking forward to increasing the interaction between animation professionals, students and enthusiasts worldwide. By striving to accurately portray the complete animation arena, I hope to present a lively forum of ideas that leads to discussions about what is happening, both good and bad, in our medium. I always encourage you, the readers, to take an active part in our magazine by contacting us and letting us know your comments or what topics you would like to see in the future. Only with your input can we truly meet your needs. This ability to interact, directly and quickly, is what makes an Internet publication so special. This is your magazine as much as it is ours.

Heather Kenyon, Editor-in-Chief

It is fitting that the first issue I am working on is dealing with education and jobs. In my former position as Manager of Production Information at Hanna-Barbera Cartoons, recruiting talent was one of my duties. It is interesting that the problems I saw time and time again have been echoed by many voices from around the world. Recruiters are in desperate need for talented, experienced people. Students are desperate to break into this business that has been labeled a "gold mine." However, many of them fall short on basic drawing skills and the understanding of the process of animation and why it is unique from other mediums. One of our articles, however, highlights a promising trend. "The Digital Demand" by Tammy Glenn describes a new scholarship program that joins government and industry together in order to prepare students for a career.

Not only are lawmakers beginning to see the usefulness of the arts but perhaps we are beginning to see some much needed funding coming back to school art programs. Industry is also awakening and beginning to ask how they can become more involved with education. Seventeen studios and entertainment companies collaborated with Santa Monica College in order to create its new media program. Silicon Graphics has not only supported schools like the University of Southern California and the University of California at Los Angeles but has also embarked in a training program in conjunction with Human Resources Marketing Services. The pair have ensured that Warner Digital, Pacific Ocean Post, Four Media Company, MediaLab and Sony Pictures Imageworks will review the work of top students who complete the course.

In this issue, Alice Carter also examines the ACME Virtual Training

ANIMATION WORLD NETWORK
6525 Sunset Blvd.,
Garden Suite 10
Hollywood, CA 90028
Phone : 213.468.2554
Fax : 213.464.5914
Email : info@awn.com

ANIMATION WORLD MAGAZINE
editor@awn.com

PUBLISHER
Ron Diamond, President
Dan Sarto, Chief Operating Officer

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Heather Kenyon

ASSOCIATE EDITOR/PUBLICITY
Wendy Jackson

CONTRIBUTORS :
Alice Carter
Paul Driessen
Tammy I. Glenn
Steve Hulett
Wendy Jackson
Heather Kenyon
Susan Palmer
Richard Taylor
Pamela Kleibrink Thompson
Glenn Vilppu
Annick Teninge

Le WEBMASTER
Guillaume Calop

DESIGN/LAYOUT :
John Parazette-Tillar
Guillaume Calop
IMP Graphic

ADVERTISING SALES
North America : Bart Vitek
UK: Roger Watkins

Network which proves that while computer training is the talk of the town, traditional skills are also still in heavy demand. MCI, GTE, Bell South, Pacific Bell, EDNet, VTEL Corporation, schools and Warner Bros. Feature Animation have teamed up to bring professionals directly into classrooms. It is heartening to see that while everyone agrees that computers are going to play a prominent roll in the future, they also agree that strong drawing skills remain supreme.

Furthermore, I would like to add that as the industry becomes more involved in schooling, I hope that our institutions do not become production lines pumping out automated replicas. It was so refreshing to read the alumnae surveys that we received. Both Wendy Jackson, the Associate Editor, and I enjoyed the excitement that leapt off the faxes we received. These alumnae loved their schools because they loved the absolute freedom in which they could explore the expression of themselves. We should always remember education should inspire and not just train.

On a sad note, a true friend to students, Phyllis Craig, has passed away. A 45 year animation veteran, Phyllis was working at Film Roman in the color key department. Phyllis started the internship program there, and through her involvement with Women In Animation (WIA), headed up the Youth and Education Committee. Numerous students have been counseled by Phyllis, and as a result have found their way into studios all over town. She is a great example of how one individual can help students find the animation community more accessible. Every time we got together, we would all wait to hear Phyllis' most recent success story. Phyllis, always cheery, always helpful and always sincere, would tell of a student who now had an internship or had just been accepted into a wonderful university or art program; and always Phyllis would say it was because they were a great kid, not because she had arranged an interview or a tour or a lecture, etc. With a student addition here, and a student addition there, I think we are all better off thanks to Phyllis. Next month we will feature a tribute to her. If you would like to contribute a remembrance, photograph or drawing we would be more than happy to include it.

Please send us your materials by June 10th.

E-mail: editor@awn.com
Fax:213-464-5914
Mail: Phyllis Craig Tribute
Animation World Network
6525 Sunset Blvd, Garden Suite 10
Hollywood, CA 90028

I look forward to hearing from you and speaking to you again next month.

-Heather Kenyon

Letters to the Editor
June 1997

Note From an Author

Dear Editors,

Could you please pass on my thanks to Fred Patten for the favorable and very complete review of my book, Samurai From Outer Space, in the May edition. I enjoy all favorable comments, but those that come from someone who obviously knows what he's talking about, like Fred Patten, are especially pleasing.

Yours truly,

Antonia Levi

Recalling Inspirations

Dear Mr. Diamond,

For what it's worth, the PBS program that you refer to as The World of Animation in your "Words from the Publisher" article (Animation World Magazine, May 1997 issue) was actually titled International Animation Festival. As I recall, there were two seasons of 13 shows and the producer was Sheldon Renan. I remember it well, because it also affected me quite a bit. It would be nice if someone could revive this program.

David Kilmer

For the Record

Hi, ho!

Have you guys seen the article about new cartoon history books in the May12 issue of TIME magazine? This has got to be one of the more extensive spreads I've seen in a national magazine on animation. The best fun fact: Ubiwerks sold his 20% share of Disney for $2,920. back in 1930! This makes me feel a little better about my own financial decisions!

Cheers,

Paul Etcheverry

From Humble Beginnings to the Makings of Superstars: Animation Wages Past, Present and Future

by Steve Hulett

In the Seventies, when Gerald Ford was president and home computers were just gleams in Jobs' and Wozniak's young, forward-looking eyes, "film animation" was pretty much the same as it had been since the Twenties—cartoon characters drawn on paper, painted on cels, and then photographed against a painted background by a film camera mounted on a heavy metal stand. The animated product was, as it had been for decades, divided between television animation, which was, in the mid-Seventies, still done predominantly in the U.S., and theatrical animation, which basically referred to Disney's animated features, turned out at the rate of one fully animated, 82-minute film every two to four years.

Illustration by Tom Sito. © Tom Sito.

Way back then, weekly salaries were relatively cut and dried. If you were starting out, you worked at a union minimum rate that ran from $200.-$400. per week, depending on the job. If you were a veteran, you worked above scale, maybe even $200. or $300. above minimum per week! But nobody was making a huge killing, not even those "stars" of animation that had worked with Walt since the Hyperion Studio days. My father, Ralph Hulett, a Disney background artist, began his Disney career in the Thirties, and by the time of his death in 1974, had negotiated a princely salary of $500. per week. Top Disney animators were making a few hundred dollars more per week. Long-time company staffers did not get rich from high salaries. They got rich, or at least comfortably fixed, from company stock options.

From the Twenties and Thirties onward, folks who worked in animation had never been high-salaried Hollywood employees. Top live-action Hollywood writers might pull down from $1,000. to $5,000. per week in the late '30s. The big talents at Disney, like Fred Moore, Bill Tytla and Art Babbitt, earned $300.-$400. each payday, and considered it big money for animation, which it was. Many employees at Disney made fifteen dollars a week. Art Babbitt, in fact, was so upset that his assistant was making only $25. per week that he supplemented the man's salary out of his own pocket. Young Ralph Hulett, all of twenty-five years old, pulled down $15. every payday.

The Union Comes to Town

The coming of labor unions to Hollywood had a large impact on the pay envelopes of many animation workers. It's seldom focused on, but when the Screen Cartoonists Guild organized the Disney studios in 1941, the lowest-paid workers saw their salaries double overnight. The paltry $15. paychecks were suddenly $25. or $30.

My father Ralph Hulett, a Disney background artist, began his Disney career in the Thirties and by the time of his death in 1974, had negotiated a princely $500 a week salary.

But in the late thirties and early forties, the heavy-duty cash in cartoon-land was not being paid in California. The place where animators, assistants and layout people lived like kings was in the sun-kissed

Ralph Hulett animating on the left, with a colleague at Disney Studios, 1939.

city of Miami. The Fleischer brothers had fled south to Florida after their New York Studio had been unionized. The irony was, while escaping "exorbitant" union minimums and working conditions, the brothers were forced to pay big money to lure artists to Miami. Assistants were paid the outlandish sum of $100. per week. Inbetweeners and breakdown artists made double or triple what they would have pulled down at Disney.

That first Golden Age lasted until the Fleischer studios closed during the war, a victim of the lackluster performance of its second animated feature, Mr. Bug Goes To Town, and Paramount Picture's reluctance to foot the studio's escalating bills. When the war ended, artists were mustered out of the service and back to their light boards. Once again, pay rates fell back into their regular ruts.

It's easier to educate an experienced artist to use a Silicon Graphics machine than train a computer wizard the skills of Rembrandt or Picasso.

The New Golden Age

Which brings us to the new golden times in animation—the high-flying present. Cartoon-making has always been a roller-coaster industry, moving upward in wages and employment when huge successes like Snow White roll down the tracks, and dropping like an overloaded ore bucket when a movie bombs. In the late fifties, Disney's $4 million opus, Sleeping Beauty tanked at movie box offices, and the 1,200-person Disney animation staff was cut to 200. If Hanna-Barbera had not been gearing up to supply a steady quarter-century of television animation employment, many artists and technicians would have been permanently out of the cartoon industry. Shortly thereafter, an equilibrium developed between feature and television animation that lasted for the next twenty years. Television rose as theatrical work leveled off or fell and it helped to keep wages at a steady, but relatively low, altitude. Low, that is, until the animated market place exploded in the late '80s.

And why suddenly the big ka-bang? Two things happened during Ronald Reagan's last term to blast animation wages through the roof, for the first time since Fleischer moved to Florida. Television animation expanded and then expanded again, driven by the success of syndicated cartoon shows in afternoon time-slots and the voracious appetite for product by expanding cable networks. Even more importantly, with the release of pictures like An American Tail, The Land Before Time, Who Framed Roger Rabbit, and Beauty and the Beast, theatrical animation suddenly became a high-profit center for Disney and Steven Spielberg. Animation producers discovered, to their amazed delight, that not only did they rake in big bucks with their theatrical releases, but when the films were distributed on video-cassette, every eight-year-old in America had to have one. The corporation that owned the latest animated blockbuster could almost open its own mint.

When the Screen Cartoonists Guild organized the Disney studios in 1941, the lowest-paid workers saw their salaries double overnight.

Animation was suddenly "hot" in ways it had never been before. Companies who had never contemplated cartoon production were suddenly falling all over themselves to get into the game. DreamWorks, Warner Bros. and Fox were anxious to grab the ball away from the large, wealthy mouse named Disney. Unfortunately for them, and ultimately Disney, there was a limited number of qualified artists in animation. Adam Smith's laws of economics were just as ironclad for cartoon studios as car part factories; when supply is low and demand high, prices rise.

So, Who's Making What?

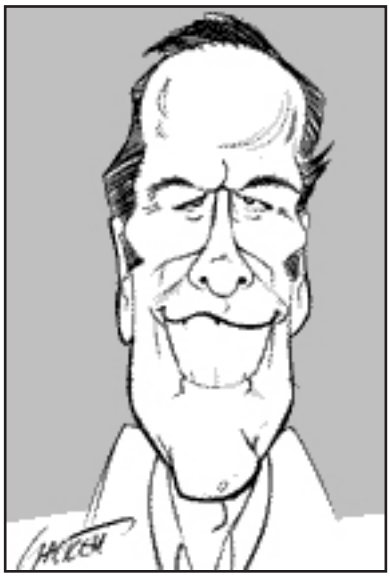
As I write, wages for experienced animation workers are at an all-time high. Not too many years

Art Babbit. ***Photo courtesy of MPSC.***

ago, key assistant animators were earning a scale of $950. per week. Today, they often make twice that. Lead key assistants were once happy earning $1,100. or $1,200. each payday, now they feel cheated if they're only making $2500. Animators take home anywhere from the current $1,170. scale up to $6,500. per week. And a few high-falootin' tyros—supervising directors, lead animators, art directors, key designers—earn over a million dollars per year with stock options and handsome bonuses thrown into the bargain.

And why suddenly the big ka-bang?

All these wages have come to pass in the last half decade. Some of the higher cartoon pay-rates, frankly, seem slightly ludicrous, but in an industry that pays a former agent $90 million plus for fourteen months of mediocre work, nothing is ludicrous. This is, after all, Hollywood. A place where executives fail and become multi-millionaires. A place where balding actors pull down ten or twenty million a



Caricature of Steve Hulett by Scott Sackett.

May 17, 1941. The Schlesinger lockout.
Photo courtesy of Ben Shenkman.

picture, even while their last "blockbuster" goes down in flames.

The Future's Digital Twist

Where will wages be in five years? Common wisdom would tell us lower rather than higher, but there are too many variables to predict the future with any accuracy. If Disney releases two or three *Sleeping Beautys* in a row, wages will likely fall. If Disney's competitors find the animated releases from their new cartoon divisions still-born at the box office, departments will shrink and wages will certainly fall. But the steady march of computers and technology will probably enable animators with skills in traditional animation to swing over to live-action epics such as *Jurassic Park III* and *Titanic IV*. After all, it's easier to educate an experienced artist to use a Silicon Graphics machine than train a computer wizard the skills of Rembrandt or Picasso.

However, if wages are suddenly lower at animation houses, they might well be higher at various industry effects houses like Sony Pictures ImageWorks, DreamQuest, and Industrial Light & Magic. The Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers recently published a report stating that over 300 Californian animation and digital effects companies will be needing more than a few trained artists in coming years. I have also been reliably informed that in the year 1996, seasoned computer animators made $4,000. to $7,000. per week working on the Michael J. Fox ghost film, *The Frighteners*, in New Zealand. It's kind of hard to resist working in a business that pays salaries like that!

Where will wages be in five years? Common wisdom would tell us lower...but...

So, what will animation artists and technicians be making in 2002? Come back in December, 2001 and I'll tell you. The news will probably be music to your ears.

For a more detailed wage survey, visit the MPSC web site in AWN's Animation Village (http://www.awn.com).

Steve Hulett, currently Business Representative for the M. P. S. C. Local 839 IATSE, was born and raised in Southern California. He worked at Disney from 1976 to 1986, where he labored on The Fox and the Hound, Winnie The Pooh *and* A Day For Eeyore, The Black Cauldron, The Great Mouse Detective, *and* Oliver and Company. *He later worked as an animation writer for Warner Bros. TV Animation and Filmation; at the latter studio, he was one of the hardy band of cartoon employees who was present at the company's demise in 1989. He is of the opinion that it's far easier being laid off from a company that is folding than from a company that is thriving but just doesn't want you around any more.*

The Digital Demand: California Governor Pete Wilson Proposes A Scholarship Initiative

by Tammy Glenn

A shortage of digital artists in Hollywood has led California Governor Pete Wilson to propose a new pilot Cal Grant scholarship program. A CalGrant is a government-funded scholarship granted to economically disadvantaged students who exhibit great potential. Wilson's proposed pilot would provide $1.2 million in grants to as many as 500 students who show promise in the field of digital animation. This proposal comes in response to the current outcry by entertainment and multimedia executives who are going outside of the United States to fill local jobs.

According to Rosalie Zalis, senior policy advisor for Governor Wilson, current estimates indicate that about 60 percent of entertainment industry digital animators are being recruited from outside of the United States. This number translates into several thousand jobs and has a noticeable impact on the California tax base. Predictions also indicate that the demand for digital artists will grow by 20 percent every year for the next five years.

"This is the field for students to be in," enthuses Mary Jo Maxwell, president of the Rowland Unified School Board. "If they have the skills and the training, they can basically write their own contract." Rowland Heights High School has had an animation training program in place for the past 18 years and Maxwell said animation is a seller's market for people who have the correct skills.

A New Deal

All the more reason for the Governor's pilot program to vie for approval in the state legislature. However, once the program is in place, it will take approximately two to four years before students are prepared to enter the job market. "The way this program works, they'll not only be equipped with education to last them for the next six months, they'll have such a well-grounded education, they will be able to adapt themselves to the industry as it changes in the future," Zalis explained. "The need today may not be the need in two years."

California Governor Pete Wilson.

"This is the field for students to be in."

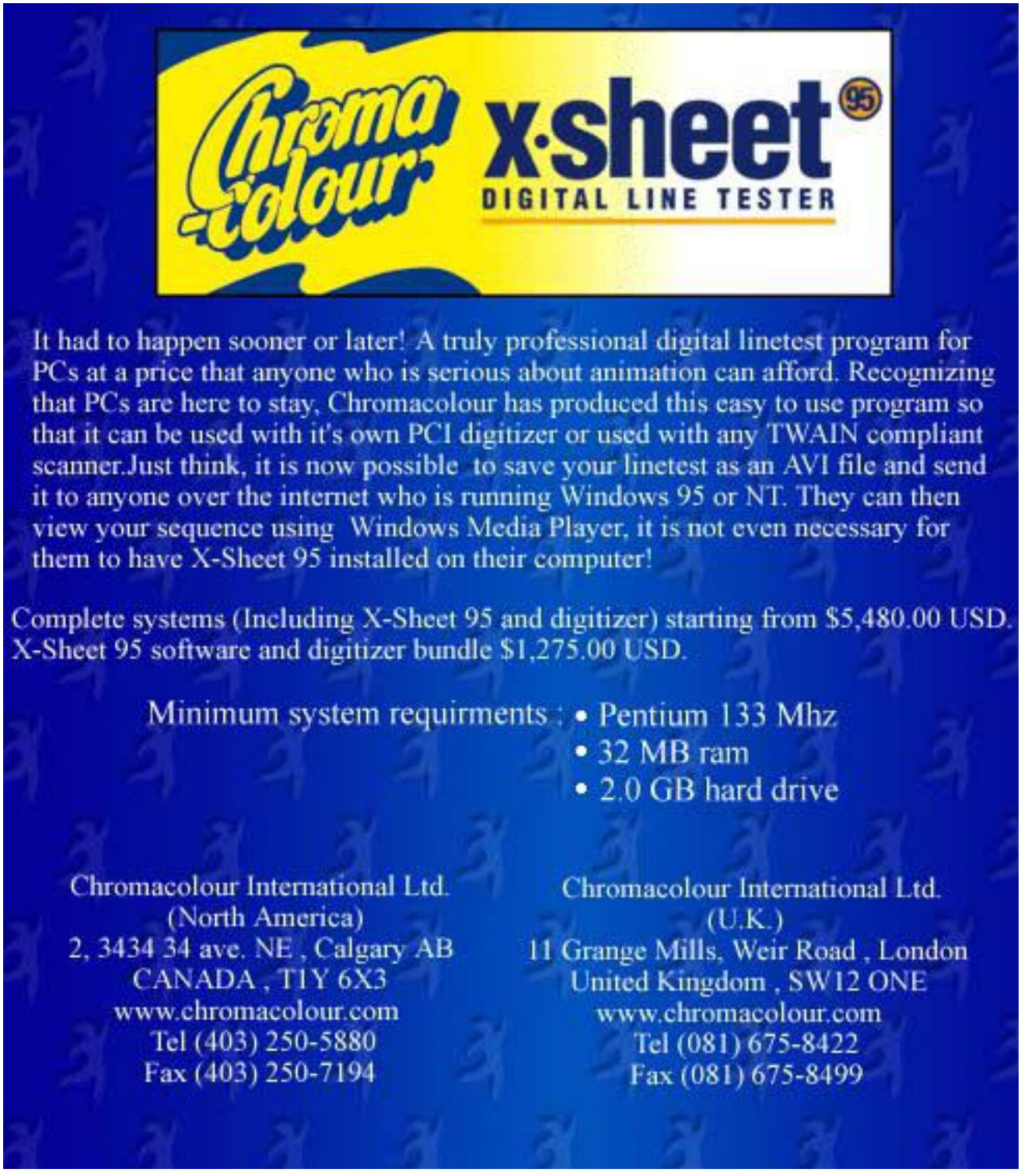
California State University, Northridge career counselor, John Arany's greatest concern is whether or not the demand will sustain itself. Artists with the right skills and training are seeing "sizzling, skyrocketing salaries" for digital animation careers. Audiences can be fickle, however, and Arany points out that what's hot today may not be tomorrow. Therefore, it is important for programs put into place to address the needs of the future as well. "That's not true for a lot of government training programs," Arany said. "When students come out of school, a lot of times the market is saturated."

Beefing Up the Arts

Assemblywoman Kerry Mazzoni (Democrat, San Rafael, California), chair of the State Assembly

Education Committee, believes that statewide arts programs have tended to go on the chopping block when it comes to appropriate resources. Since the arts have been cut at the K-12 level, it's forced many schools to rely on outside agencies to provide art education.

"As far as I'm concerned, arts are part of the core curriculum," states Mazzoni. "I've been concerned for a number of years that we haven't had the quality of arts programs that we've needed." Mazzoni realizes the potential of the Cal Grants initiative to impact positively all educational levels - from university all the way to elementary level. She is a proponent of the governor's proposal and has voiced her opinion at recent hearings regarding the issue. She emphasized that this Cal Grant program promises to open up numerous opportunities to students, especially students who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may not be academically inclined.

Industry Involvement

"It's a win-win-win for everybody. This is a scholarship opportunity that will open the door to the economically disadvantaged," Zalis states. The proposed Cal Grant program is unusual in that it is based on artistic promise and problem-solving ability, not solely GPA. The awards will also rely on industry professionals and academic experts to determine which students will be awarded the grant monies.

Also unique to the program is that it calls for matching grants from the multimedia and entertainment industry in the amount of $1 million. Sony was the first to step forward with $150,000. in matching funds. DreamWorks SKG, Disney and 20th Century Fox have also announced matching grants.

This dramatic response is part of the reason why Assemblywoman Mazzoni supports the program. "I think it's appropriate for the state to encourage industry," Mazzoni said. In fact, Mazzoni claims that many of her region's multimedia jobs are filled by Pacific Rim and Canadian citizens that have been secured to meet our demand. In light of this Mazzoni thinks that the governor's proposal "is another way to involve industry in education. This program is based on matching grants. It's not the kind of hand-out schools have been known to ask for. We're looking at tangible returns that will come back to industry."

The Small Print

Before being fully approved, this initiative has to go through several hearings, including a full budget committee hearing, where $200,000. in administrative costs must be endorsed. Because the initiative requires an expenditure of state funds, it is part of the state budget which must be approved by the state legislature.

The state fiscal year ends and begins on July 1st. However, the state budget is often not approved by this date. According to Zalis, this particular Cal Grant initiative has bi-partisan support and shouldn't have too much trouble negotiating the administrative process but will not go into action until the state budget is approved.

"It's a win-win-win for everybody."

Students receiving grant monies would be eligible for up to four years based on financial need and satisfactory academic progress.

Kerry Mazzoni

The amount available per student ranges from $530. at a community college up to $7,164. at private institutions, and can be used to cover tuition as well as fees and living expenses. By the academic year 2000/2001, the program aims to be funding about $6 million in grants to students annually.

Another plus for California educators is that the Digital Arts and Multimedia Initiative will be based on new monies to fund the scholarships and will not take away from existing Cal Grant reserves. Applications for the 1997 Fall term are already being accepted through the California Student Aid Commission, pending approval of the 1997/1998 budget.

Furthermore, grants are only eligible for use in Californian schools, which should create a demand for larger, more enhanced programs. Students do want to be prepared for their careers, and if the state can help, in conjunction with industry, then California is paving a path for the arts to drive the future. What a change it will be when the arts are showcased as an active ingredient to a thriving economy.

Tammy I. Glenn is the creative director of Glenn Productions Children's Books & Music and a freelance writer based out of the Los Angeles area.

Scouting For Talent: Where the Recruiters Go.

by Pamela Kleibrink Thompson

The international box office bonanza of recent animated hits such as The Lion King has prompted every other major studio to develop and produce animated features. Animation has also returned to the small screen's prime time as well as to the expanding cable and syndication markets. Studios specializing in interactive product, commercials, and special effects are also increasing their demand for animation talent. We have all heard about this incredible boon to the animation industry which brings plenty of opportunity for those who want a career in animation and plenty of competition among companies for the best talent.

"The computer is just a tool. Too many people become entrenched in the box. A CG animator must have training in the basic principles of life drawing and animation." - Brad Reinke, Dream Works SKG

The Hot Spots

Jacquelyn Ford Morie, a trainer at VIFX and former technologies training manager at Disney Feature Animation, listed several of the Disney "feeder schools." These are schools that have programs coinciding with the type of fundamental art training necessary for Disney animators, and that currently participate in the Disney Animation "Boot Camp" Internship Program. Unless otherwise noted, these schools are especially strong in the areas of traditional animation: Art Center College of Design, Columbus

Pamela K. Thompson.

College of Art and Design, New York School of Visual Art (both traditional and CGI), Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), Academy of Art San Francisco, Canada's Sheridan College of Applied Arts and Technology, California Institute of the Arts (Cal Arts), Kansas City Art Institute, Pratt Institute, Ringling (both traditional and CGI), and the Fashion Institute of Technology. Morie also recommends Vancouver's Emily Carr College of Art & Design for traditional animation instruction. These schools are targeted by almost all of the companies included in this article because of their strong fine arts programs.

With new studios being built around the world, are there enough traditional animators to fill the desks? Jo Hahn, the supervising producer at TSC Trickompany in Hamburg, Germany, noted that it's "hard to find talent in Europe." The big problem is the competition from companies in the United States who can offer a higher rate to artists because the typical budget of a feature in the US is about four times higher than in Germany. One of the solutions to this problem is training more people. At Trickompany, many of the artists learn on the job. The artists may be graphic designers or fine art painters who, when they are hired, know very little about animation. Hahn also attends the animation festivals in Stuttgart, Annecy, Ottawa and Pasadena to seek out artists. Moreover, schools in Luxemborg, Paris, Denmark, and Ireland's Sheridan College (yes, there are two) are also scoured for emerging talent. Trickompany artists plan to teach animation at a new animation school in Hamburg, which will be a future source of employees to the company. With 220 artists in Hamburg, and 40 at Tooncompany in Berlin, Trickompany attracts new talent by doing feature films with edgy, sexy, funny material. Trickompany advertises in a newsletter published by the European Association of Animated Film as well, but their best resource for finding new staffers is through the talent they already have. "The main thing is networking," adds Hahn.

Without training in basic drawing skills and classical animation, an applicant is "unlikely to be qualified for a position in production."

A Great Portfolio Is...

Deborah Fallows, production recruiter at Nelvana Ltd., stressed that it's essential for applicants to have formal art training. Without training in basic drawing skills and classical animation, an applicant is "unlikely to be qualified for a position in production." Many of the 400 artists on staff at the Canadian animation company came

from Sheridan College, which is only 20 kilometers from Nelvana's Toronto base of operations. Other schools with potential recruits include Capilano College in North Vancouver and the Ontario College of Art. Fallows urged students to "always show their best work in their portfolio" and that the portfolio should reflect strength and a variety of styles. Sometimes students are not aware of positions for which they might be suited. "We like to work with them to determine their strengths." When students apply to Nelvana, they should submit a resume and five to ten copies of their best work. Applicants of interest will be asked to do an appropriate test, which will be reviewed by supervisors and directors. "The test is to determine the artistic strength as well as artistic style, because the shows that Nelvana produces are very diverse."

With new studios being built around the world, are there enough traditional animators to fill the desks?

Sunbow Entertainment, an animation studio with offices in California and New York, finds candidates by placing ads in trade publications. Twenty to thirty portfolios are received and reviewed weekly. "A good portfolio speaks for itself," stated CJ Kettler, president of Sunbow in New York. In production on two series, Sunbow finds that many people are attracted to the company because it is a terrific place to work, providing artists an environment with a "small company feeling." The independent animation house does work for hire at a competitive cost for clients. Kettler's advice for struggling artists is, "It's a great business. Stay in it."

Saban Entertainment, with offices in Southern California and France, focuses their recruiting efforts on the ASIFA Job Expo, part of the World Animation Celebration, and their own "recruitment day," which became a recruitment week due to tremendous response. Producers spent 15 to 20 minutes with each artist, reviewing the portfolio and interviewing the candidate. However, some specialized jobs are extremely difficult to fill, and Saban is planning to start a training program for timing directors. Dana Booton, vice president of animation production at Saban, advised industry newcomers, "Show versatility in your portfolio. Ask for tests and include them in your portfolio. Also include life drawings. These show expression, attitude and line style, which is important."

CGI is Smokin'

CGI is undergoing phenomenal growth, with the demand for talent far exceeding the supply. Vancouver Film School offers a CGI program, as does Ohio State, Georgia Tech, and the University of Central Florida (UCF). VIFX's Morie enthusiastically discussed UCF's Digital Media Institute, and particularly their Institute of Simulation and Training, which is a visual simulation lab specializing in real-time graphics and virtual reality. It should be noted that Orlando and Miami are the fifth largest markets for animation artists after Los Angeles, New York, Chicago and San Francisco.

The department head of computer graphics at Warner Bros. Feature Animation, Tad Gielow, said the Ringling School of Art and Design in Sarasota, Florida is "turning out students who can get jobs right away. There are at least five that are immediately hirable for features or live action effects. Students there are doing excellent work." Gielow looks for character performance in demo reels from applicants. This subtlety in

A student at School of Visual Arts in New York.

animation is harder to teach than software. A stand out demo reel would show an understanding of animation basics, such as timing and weight, with some storytelling skills.

Pauline Ts'o, vice president of Rhythm & Hues, a computer animation facility in Los Angeles, says that competition for animators often makes it necessary to hire from overseas. Since the beginning of the year, three of Ts'o's seven hires have been from abroad. Rhythm & Hues is now hiring people with strong technical backgrounds to add to their staff of over 200. Ts'o looks for talent from Texas A&M, the above named schools, and post-production houses. "Working at a smaller company is often good training," said Ts'o. Her advice to those entering the field is straightforward. "For artists, do not be afraid of the technical aspects. Learn it. And for programmers, do not be afraid of the art. Learn it."

With new studios being built around the world, are there enough traditional animators to fill the desks?

According to Brad Reinke, senior technical/artistic recruiter for DreamWorks SKG, many new schools are not teaching the basic principles of animation: weight, squash and stretch, etc. The industry needs artists trained with these basic skills. He sees strong talent coming from several

trade programs as well as the schools already mentioned. "The computer is just a tool. Too many people become entrenched in the box. A CG animator must have training in the basic principles of life drawing and animation."

Jo Hahn, the supervising producer at TSC Trickompany in Hamburg, Germany, noted that it's "hard to find talent in Europe."

The Idea Folks

Before anything is drawn on paper or computer screen, there has to be an idea, a treatment, a script. Where are the creative executives finding the new hot ideas and writers? Janice Sonski, vice president of creative affairs at DIC Entertainment, found writing talent through a variety of sources including agents, recommendations from networks, contemporaries in the industry, and viewing television shows. Children's picture book authors, stand up comics and writers of live action shows have all written for DIC. Sonski noted that most writers have an agent, manager or attorney, but once a writer becomes well-known, they no longer need an agent to get them work. "Production companies tend to hire the same writers because they deliver the goods, are good with clients and are great storytellers. The writer and production company have to be very responsive to the client's needs. A writer must have very good people skills because a lot of diplomacy is needed." So many skills are required to be an animation writer that "it's almost like directing," noted Sonski. Animation is so visual that an understanding of character development, storytelling, dialog, sightgags, camera angles and staging are all musts for the successful writer.

Recruiters from all of the major studios attend Cal Arts' annual "producers' show" screenings, to get a glimpse of the best student animation work.

The Toughest Find

Translating the script into a final product requires the vision and talent of a director. David Starr, executive producer at Curious Pictures in New York, explained that directors are discovered in a variety of ways. Through word of mouth, trade publications, and Annecy, Ottawa and other festival screenings, Curious has gradually expanded their roster to 16 directors who are exclusive to the company. He noted that they "look for specific stylistic approaches to animation" when they expand their directing roster and wants to insure that directors "don't overlap stylistically." In business since February 1993, Curious Pictures attracts many people who want to work in cel animation, stop motion animation, computer animation or live action special effects. Now, the company is often sought out by directors, for instance, "Flea Circus in New Zealand found us." With a new office in San Francisco that emphasize cel animation, Curious is accessible to a talent pool in Northern California and the West Coast.

Experimental Insight

There is also ample opportunity for experimental animators, according to Christine Panushka, former associate director of experimental animation at Cal Arts and now a faculty member at the University of Southern California's (USC) Animation and Digital Arts Program, "There is no set path," she comments, "so sometimes it takes a little longer for them to find work." Experimental animators work at every level and in every area of the industry from music videos to feature films. From Wes Archer and Mark Kirkland, directors on *The Simpsons*, to Henry Selick, director of *James and the Giant Peach* to Peter Chung, creator of *Aeon Flux* to Michael Patterson who experiments in music videos, each animator finds work that fits his temperament and brings to the industry "fresh ideas and new ways of looking at animation from different points of view." Panushka added that experimental animators develop their own voice and own talent. "They are creative problem solvers," Panushka reminded. "Animation is the art of timing, of movement."

Since the beginning of the year, three of Ts'o's seven hires have been from abroad.

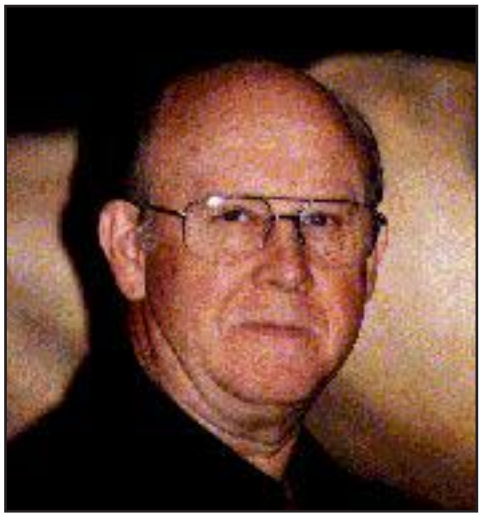
If your passion is to explore movement, then animation might be the right career for you. Hopefully, this industry input will help you find your path to the artistic niche for which you are looking.

Pamela Kleibrink Thompson is an independent recruiter specializing in artists, producers and programmers in the entertainment industry. Former clients include Disney Feature Animation, DreamQuest Images and Fox Animation Studios. She is a founding member of Women in Animation, an active member of ASIFA, and speaks regularly on animation at industry conferences including the ASIFA Job Opportunities Expo, New Animation Technology Expo and NAPTE's ANIFX in 1997.

Never Underestimate the Power of Life Drawing

by Glenn Vilppu

It always comes as a bit of a shock for students and artists preparing portfolios for animation industry positions that, almost without exception, what the studios first want to see are figure drawings from life. They don't want to see caricatures, cartoons, or copies of the studio's characters. They want traditional, classical figure drawing.



Glenn Vilppu.

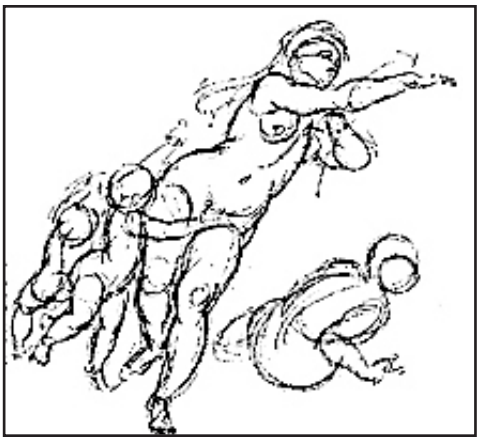
Why traditional figure drawing? First, let us look at what skills are needed in good animation drawing. At the top of the list is the ability to communicate movement and personality through drawing. By using simple lines an artist should be able to give a figure a real sense of life and individuality, not just an action pose or stereotypical expression. Next on the list is to be able to draw three dimensionally, to make the characters feel like they are not only individuals, but that they exist in a real world. Since the characters we create and work with are products of our imagination, the animation professional has to be able to draw from his imagination. Next on the list is the ability to consistently draw the same character using the same forms, proportions and details in the particular style that has been set for the production. As you can see, the list is asking for a high level of skill, and we haven't even touched on imagination, story telling and inventiveness yet.

They don't want to see caricatures, cartoons, or copies of the studio's characters. They want traditional, classical figure drawing.

Modern Renaissance Drawing

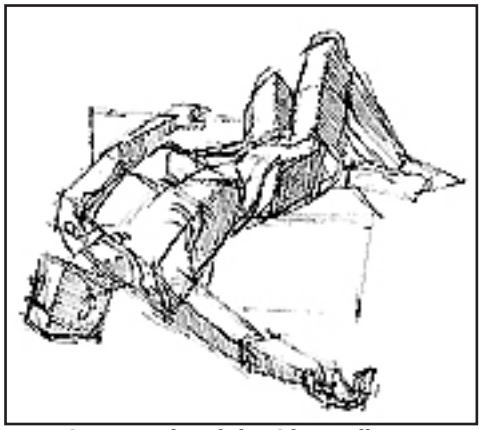
So, how do you know an artist has these skills? Figure drawing has been the standard measurement of an artist's skills for hundreds of years, probably from the moment we first started capturing the living world around us. The Renaissance artist was judged by much the same standard as the animation artist is today. The great masters of the past were first story tellers. They had to be able to create figures that the viewers could empathize with so that stories were brought to life with a sense of realism and believability. Animation drawing is, in essence, the closest thing we have to classical Renaissance drawing today.

The Renaissance artist primarily created figures to fit an ideal of perfection using simple volumes to construct figures. The constructions of Raphael are no different than many model sheets you see for classical animation. In traditional drawing, this is referred to as plastic drawing, or "using synthetic forms". This allowed the artist to create fantastic imaginary worlds peopled with figures, in the most part, drawn from imagination. The beginning compositional sketches of all artists are more similar than they are different. The goal is the same, to capture the sense of the abstract total. A compositional notation by the Mannerist artist Tintoretto would fit in quite well with rough layout and story sketches from our current major studios. The artists of the past are the inspiration and yard stick of quality that we still use.



Geometric volumes are the fundamental tools of good figure drawing. Drawing by Glenn Vilppu.

To draw the human figure well from imagination you must first be able to draw the simple forms of construction — the sphere, box, cylinder and cone — from memory, in any position and combination.



Gesture sketch by Glenn Vilppu.

The famous Flemish artist Peter Paul Rubens said that "you can draw anything using a sphere, box, and cone." These simple volumes are the foundation of good figure drawing, and are the fundamental tools of figure construction. These "tools" not only help you to draw the figure from imagination but to see the forms of the model. A portfolio will almost automatically be rejected if the figures inside do not have a clear sense of volume and unambiguous space based on model observation.

Figure drawing has been the standard measurement of an artists' skills for hundreds of years....The Renaissance artist was judged by much the same standard as the animation artist is today.

Form and Technique

It is important to understand the difference between animation drawing and drawing for illustration. As I have already mentioned, in animation we draw almost exclusively from imagination, and hence need to be able to construct a figure from the mind's eye. In illustration, the artist will generally acquire a model or use photographs to work from if needed. The illustrator also only needs the one particular view that he or she is going to use. As such, the training tends to develop a strong ability to copy a model as well as different techniques for communicating the image. In my Figure Drawing for Animation classes, I am continually telling the students that we don't copy the model. We analyze the model. As for technique, the animation artist must focus on describing form with as little individual technique as possible. An animation is a collective work from many artists. Each artist's work must blend in with the direction of the total production and not draw attention as an individual style.

The famous Flemish artist Peter Paul Rubens said that "you can draw anything using a sphere, box, and cone."

Of course, another reason for requiring a degree of skill at human figure drawing is that a lot of animation is based upon human characters. The ability to change real forms into animation forms requires knowledge of the former. You cannot draw something if you don't know what it looks like. Consequently, an animation candidate's figure drawings must show a fair degree of human anatomy comprehension. Problems while drawing from a human model, bring into question not only the artist's understanding of the figure, but also the ability to be able to follow a model sheet.

As humans, we are so tuned into the subtleties of our forms that a high level of skill and development are needed by an artist to create forms that may seem childish. In fact, this feat is often the culmination of many drawings of the human figure by a talented artist whose skills have been fully developed.

Of course, there are many exceptions to the above. We have all seen the success of characters created by artists with very little formal training. While our industry is better for these exceptions, I, personally, would bet my career on my artistic skills while I tried to develop that next Saturday morning superstar. However, keep in mind that whenever asked a question about a particular drawing, my late friend Don Griffith, the former head of the Disney layout department, would first tell you what he would do, and then he would invariably shrug his shoulders and say, "Its your career!"

The artists of the past are the inspiration and yard stick of quality that we still use.

Glenn Vilppu teaches figure drawing at the American Animation Institute, the Masters program of the UCLA Animation Dept., Walt Disney Feature Animation, Warner Bros. Feature Animation and Rhythm & Hues Studios. Vilppu has also worked in the Animation industry for 18 years as a layout, storyboard and presentation artist. His drawing manual and video tapes are being used worldwide as course materials for animation students.

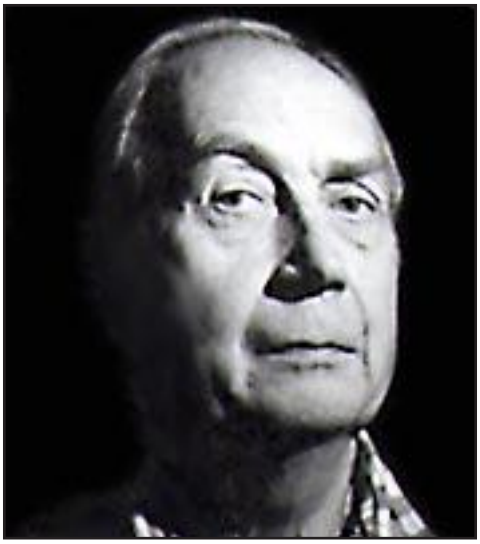
One, Two, Three Steps to Success Through the UK Educational System

by Richard Taylor

Let's get one thing clear. If Disney and Hanna-Barbara are the Ford and General Motors of animation, British production houses are closer to the sort of workshops that turn out four cars a week. Even companies that have had periods of successful series production have suffered from swings between boom and bust, and their output has never been sure of an international market. Thus, the UK has never had a settled system for taking trainees into an industry with a continuous demand for them. Only in the last few years have British studios banded together to provide a training course for assistant animators. But even this has been made possible only with the help of the EC organization CARTOON, and in order to be enrolled in this program, trainees must already be employed by a studio.

Many students, after their first degree, however, choose to go on to either the RCA or the NFTS and then seek broadcast commissions.

Entry into an animation studio, or even making any attempt to get animation experience, is much more common through one of the art colleges. We have a lot of art schools, and any reputation the UK has as a source of "cool" comes from things that have happened there, from fashion to bands.



Richard Taylor.

Cool, Cool Art Schools

If I had to make a list of schools, apart from the Royal College of Art (RCA) and the National Film and Television School (NFTS), that have stood out as nurseries of animators, it would be: West Surrey, the first college to offer a BA purely in animation, Gwent in Wales, Liverpool, Harrow, St Martin's in London, and also Middlesex. All these schools change their official titles and their organization from time to time, but I have used the names by which they are generally known.

In these schools' two or three-year animation, or more often, graphics courses, students have to produce a film as evidence of successful study for their degree. This to usually a complete film, made virtually single-handedly. As a result, these students tend to learn only the technicalities and skills necessary to that one work, and they learn them not according to the production methods current in professional studios, but in a more haphazard and chancy way.

The animator who is trained in a production studio has to earn, usually over several years, the right to be in sole control of a film. The student animator, on the other hand, has the necessity forced on him or her of exposing their solo work without, perhaps, enough preparation.

Both student and studio animators do not grow food. They do not make useful pots or pans, motor cars or airplanes. They heal no illnesses. What good are they? Well, society tolerates and supports them because it needs the job they do. They communicate. They share with an audience a piece of work in picture and sound, which entertains them, informs them or persuades them.

The Student Animator

That being the job they do, it follows that the main purpose of

The Monk and the Fish **by Michael Dudok de Wit.**

NFTS' star student, Nick Park.

educating animators must be to help them communicate better. This education is not just a matter of instructing and instilling skills and technical knowledge. A much larger part is played by giving students the circumstances for self-discovery. The progressive steps that occur in the UK are: a first degree course in one of the local art colleges, then a post-graduate period at either the NFTS or the RCA, then perhaps one of the commissioning schemes supported by Channel Four, MOMI (Museum of the Moving Image) and the Arts Council. Finally there is the prospect of the enlightened patronage of Channel Four and the BBC. Together these steps provide a unique climate for animators to develop into filmmakers.

We have a lot of art schools, and any reputation the UK has as a source of "cool" comes from things that have happened there, from fashion to bands.

Perhaps I need to say something more on this idea of self-discovery. Many students, particularly those with whom I dealt with at the RCA, come to animation with a strong and vivid pictorial imagination but little sense of joining images and ideas together in time. They have to learn how to build what is generally described as "story." Even the most abstract, moody and allusive films require a story structure. Although a teacher may emphasize this in the formal instruction that he or she gives, I have found that this is not as convincing to students as their own experience.

The trainee in a production house learns from watching the development of the films he or she works on and the eventual success or failure of those films. This learning comes with years. With students in colleges, you have to try to produce that effect quicker. Only by seeing their completed works — not tests or experiments, but completed pieces — can filmmakers begin to appreciate what an audience sees and feels. As an example of this theory in practice, we found at the RCA that it is useful for every student in the ten weeks of their second term to complete, through every technical stage, a coherent one-minute film. The subject of the film is either given to them or proposed by the student. The success of the work is judged by how well they achieve their stated aim. These finished, complete and public pieces, are then outside of the students. As a result, it came directly home to them how well they and their fellow students had succeeded in their stated aim of communication. That is the essential element of self-discovery. It is the discovery of yourself in relation to your audience.

Groundwork

More than twenty UK first degree art colleges have, or had, courses which allow or encourage students to try animation. These courses began in the Seventies and Eighties either within a normal graphic design course or as an offshoot from them. Sometimes the only provisions were no more than a video line tester and some available time. (Tutors of graphic design are not always tolerant of the heavy demand on time that animation makes.) The development of the video line tester was a vital ingredient to this kind of animation learning. Formal teaching by experienced professionals was uncommon. Many students finished their course with animated work in their portfolios but found themselves seen as unemployable by studios who expected the schools to have trained them in conventional methods. Talent will succeed however, and many such graduates have done well with unorthodox methods that have, in fact, influenced the mainstream. Of course, recent years have also seen the introduction of computer use, which has similarly brought change to every stage of filmmaking.

If Disney and Hanna-Barbara are the Ford and General Motors of animation, British production houses are closer to the sort of workshops that turn out four cars a week.

Of those who have progressed straight from their first degree to gaining broadcast commissions, I would cite Joanna Quinn whose Girls' Night Out, begun at Middlesex University, and led to Body Beautiful and then Britannia. She has recently directed Famous Fred for TVC. Michael Dudok de Wit, another West Surrey student, worked in the Richard Purdum Studio for some years before making his name with The Monk And The Fish.

Many students, after their first degree, however, choose to go on to either the RCA or the NFTS and then seek broadcast commissions. Both can be regarded as hav-

ing post-graduate courses, in that applicants must have previous animation work to show. The RCA is a definitely academic institution and awards a masters degree, while the NFTS graduates receive no official diploma.

Animators do not grow food. They do not make useful pots or pans, motor cars or airplanes. They heal no illnesses. What good are they?

The National Film and Television School

The NFTS is a school related more closely to the film and television industries. As its name implies, it trains students for all aspects of filmmaking. Besides producing and directing, the school also has courses in camera work, sound recording, editing and so on. Before they can concentrate on their own chosen technique, all students, even those intending to specialize in animation, are required to spend part of their first year learning about every aspect of filmmaking. For animation, there is no formal teaching in the technique, but each student has an allowance of money, apart from his or her production budget, to pay for visiting teachers. (I believe, however, that this way of doing things is now changing.) Until recently the school allowed students to stay on for an unlimited time to work on their productions; the budget provided for them, however, remained fixed. Some students stayed attached to the school for several years while from time to time they worked in professional studios. Nick Park, for instance, remained at the school for around six years while finishing A Grand Day Out and working part time at Aardman Animation. The course is now limited to three years.

All work done at the school is expected to be a collaboration, and so the animators benefit from the support of editors, script-writers, sound experts and other "production" staff. This factor, and the general tooling of contact with the practical film and television world, has given the student animation work of the NFTS a strength in entertainment beyond the usual run of student work.

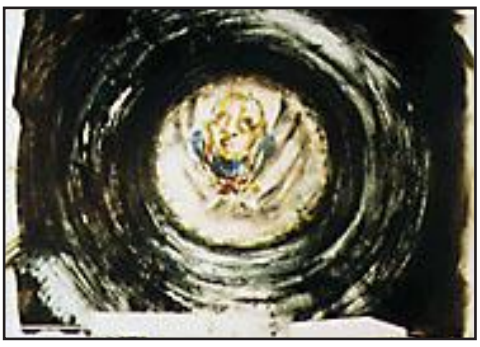
Mark Baker's *The Hill Farm.*

What sort of animators has this system produced? I must be forgiven for bringing up Nick Park again, but he is a perfect example of what I describe. Starting from a provincial art school, he gained a place at the NFTS. During his student time on A Grand Day Out, he received good industry experience with Aardman Animation. Then Channel Four came into the picture with a commission for Creature Comforts. The success of that film awakened the BBC's interest, and the other two Wallace and Gromit films were the result. Other NFTS graduates had similar transitions to professional work. Derek Hayes and Phil Austin created Animation City. David Anderson worked both with Occam Productions and Redwing. Mark Baker went from West Surrey College to production work, then to the NFTS where he had success with The Hill Farm which in turn led to Channel Four commissioning The Village. Tony Collingwood's film Rarg, made at the NFTS, led directly to a commission of a children's series by an American company.

He told them to ignore any technical misgivings, and sent them into the streets, parks and pubs to draw and animate directly from life.

The Royal College of Art

The course at the RCA is the one of which I can speak more accurately since I was for some years its director. The college is a unique school of art and design. It attracts very high quality students, not only from Britain, but also from the rest of the world. Courses in engineering and car design co-exist with painting, fashion, photography, film and animation. The students are there for two years, and compared with the NFTS, filmmaking budgets are small. As a comparison, an NFTS student would expect an average of £18,000 for his or her production, while at the RCA a tenth of that would be a generous estimate. In spite of that, we were able in the two years to give students the opportunity to enlarge their knowledge and develop their skills so that each of them could produce, upon graduation, a respectable film. In some cases the films were outstanding. The numbers in the course are low, with an average of ten students in each



Karen Kelly's *Stressed.*

year. A personal tutorial system ensured that every one of them was continually advised on the progress of his or her production. We, the teachers, were in essence producers for the students.

All of the teaching staff are also working professional animators, with a clear idea of what graduates need in order to survive in the world. The course was designed first, to eliminate technical gaps and shortcomings, and then second, to develop strengths in picture-making and communication.

Graduate work from the RCA has also achieved some notice. With smaller budgets and less direct industrial contact, the films have naturally been more personal and esoteric. The recognition they have gained has often been at animation festivals to an audience of enthusiasts, but many have earned themselves broadcast distribution from both Channel Four and other European TV stations. An Vrombaut, whose first degree was from Gent in Belgium, produced *Little Wolf,* a student film that was not only professionally competent but also entertaining.

Susan Young with her film *Carnival,* and Jonathan Hodgson with *Menagerie,* both Liverpool graduates, started themselves on a steady professional career. Liverpool has sent many students onto the RCA. The course director there, Ray Field, inspired a generation of young people. He told them to ignore any technical misgivings, and sent them into the streets, parks and pubs to draw and animate directly from life. The resulting work lacked polish, but sparkled with vitality. Besides Young and Hodgson, I would mention Stuart Hilton, John Parry, Corrina Askin, Sarah Cox and Debra Smith. All of those had their RCA work bought for broadcasting and went on to gain Channel Four or Arts Council commissions. Students from other colleges whose work at the RCA attracted notice and later commissions, were Karen Kelly (Harrow) with *Egoli* and *Stressed,* Phil Hunt (St. Martine) with *Spotless Dominoes* and *Ah Pook Is Here* and Anthony Hodgson (Harrow) with *Hilary* and *Combination Skin.* Sarah Kennedy's student work has led eventually to her producing a series for Channel Four called *Crapston Villas.* Emma Calder and Petra Freeman are two RCA students whose nominal studies did not include animation, but whose work there has led to animation commissions. Emma was a co-founder of the Pearly Oyster production house, and Petra has made *The Mill* for Channel Four, and *Jumping Joan* for the Arts Council.

Anthony Hodgson's *Hilary.*

All of the RCA work I have listed has earned its makers rafts of prizes at international festivals, some limited notice from broadcasters and fragile careers as independent filmmakers intermittently involved in commercial or series production. It has not made any of them big bucks.

Past the Classroom

Finally, there are two factors which have influenced the development of young animators in the UK over the last twenty years. The first is the advertising industry which has funded a variety of witty and stylish studios, so that there are adventurous models to follow. The other is the enormous influence of Channel Four Television. In the true spirit of the Channel's official remit to encourage experimentation and innovation, Paul Madden, followed by Clare Kitson, have commissioned, purchased and shown the best in animation from all over the world. Their names are rightly honored by all animators.

A commission to complete one's own film is an admirable goal. Its completion is not likely to lead to a pile of riches but will add to the world's wealth of animation and probably some studio work for the filmmaker. We are fortunate in the UK to have these opportunities to create a vibrant and active independent animation culture.

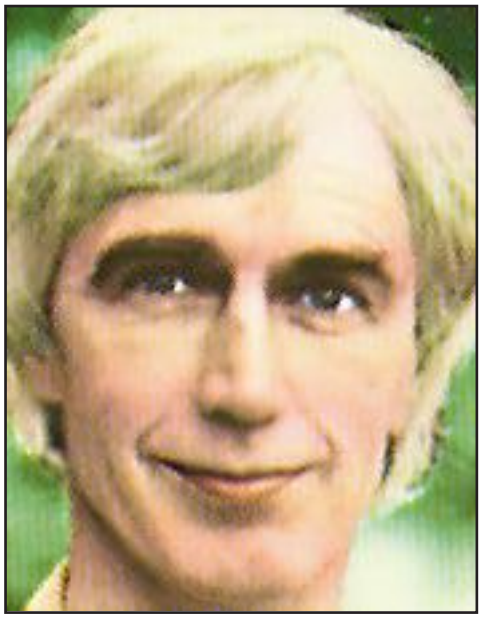
Richard Taylor has been an animator since 1953. He is the current president of ASIFA UK. Beginning as a maker of commercials, he later specialized in information and educational productions. In 1987 he joined Bob Godfrey as head of animation at the Royal College of Art, and succeeded him as professor from 1992-94.

Kassel: The Little School With a Big Name

by Paul Driessen

After two Oscars, people (including myself) are starting to wonder if there is anything that Kassel does that most other schools don't.

The animation department, part of the "Visual Communication" faculty within Kassel's art school, was founded by my illustrious predecessor, Jan Lenica, who in the mid-eighties moved to Berlin. His students then started to visit animation festivals, looking for a new teacher, when they happened to stumble upon me.



Paul Driessen.

The art school, which is part of the Kassel university but located in a different building, is based on an open system called "Freie Hochschule" (Free School). We allow students within a certain school to move freely amongst the courses of their choice. Part of the school's philosophy is that their tutors should spend time in the real world, improving their craft. This concept fits in nicely with my own working pattern, and the idea that the kind of animation I would try to communicate was going to need a lot of self-discipline from the students.

Most students are so burdened with the barrage of global TV output that they find it hard to discover where their own qualities lie.

Style And Structure

My teaching takes the shape of workshops in which I explain my view of animation. I show my students the wide range of possibilities that techniques offer them, and think up some basic but essential exercises, mainly involving story-telling and movement. I then try to get them excited to do their own thing, in a personal, original style.

Finding that personal style proved to be most difficult. Most students are so burdened with the barrage of global TV output that they find it hard to discover where their own qualities lie. The era of relative isolation in which I grew up made the development of an original style, both in design and way of thinking, much easier, and it helps me to sort out other people's dilemmas.

With no previous experience in teaching, I am still wondering about the mechanics of it. It is interesting for me to observe how, after a few hints of what could make an interesting story, some students suddenly catch on and come up with something really good. I would always stress the point that a good animation film doesn't necessarily need a story, as long as it has a structure, a defined plan, a sense of direction; at least something that makes it not only a work of art, but, more importantly, a film. Most of the Kassel students, though, focus on story, which is where I feel I can help out best. This commitment to story is usually a first step toward that weird phenomenon, a local prize the whole world knows about, the Oscar.

Kassel students celebrating Christoph and Wolfgang Lauenstein's 1990 Oscar for *Balance*.

Giving your film a sound structure before you start the project is the best guarantee to avoid spending the rest of your life on your first film. Even so, the time and effort spent on the student films often exceeds what we anticipate.

Tyron Montgomery setting lights on the large (120 square feet) 3D set of *Quest*., which was re-built several times for the different scenes. "All details were done in forced perspective, so the set looked bigger than it was," describes the student director.

Quest is a good example of what seemed to be a never ending story. But then again, it did quite well and was worth the wait!

Giving your film a sound structure before you start the project is the best guarantee to avoid spending the rest of your life on your first film.

Tools and Technology

We should keep in mind that these are student projects. Given the fact that our means are rather primitive, as is the case in most schools, students simply need more time to figure out how to accomplish the goals they set.

The Kassel animation department has two 16mm Cras cameras, the Take-Two Amiga line-test system and three 16mm editing tables, which we share with the Documentary Film department. One of the tables has been attached to a mix panel by the indispensable Kazimierz Bendkowski. Bendkowski, a well known photographer in his younger years, now teaches the technical aspects of film making at the school.

Most of our equipment is old and certainly not up to today's standards, so some students have taken the initiative to go more professional. Thomas Stellmach recovered an old 35mm stop-motion camera and Steenbeck editor, fixed them up and then got himself a decent sound computer. Quest came out of this investment. Of course, fellow students got excited, and started to borrow his equipment. This made me a little uneasy, for I always advocated the idea that a school should be a place to learn and our means should therefore be affordable; in other words, 16mm should be good enough. However, after two Academy Awards, I'm not so sure if that lofty idealism still stands.

Because of our latest Oscar for Quest, chances are that we can update our equipment somewhat; there is even talk of acquiring the Toonz or Animo computer systems. These are the kind of tools that animation students should get acquainted with for life after school.

For *Quest*, a small set in the cellar was used for close-ups. Notice the Arri camera on an old animation stand, for which Montgomery wrote a motion control program. On the left is the line-tester used to check the animation.

A Need to Grow?

Another badly needed commodity at Kassel is space. We have very little of it and if, for instance, someone wants to do model animation, a lengthy retreat to some cramped basement room is their only option now. Repeatedly, poor Thomas Stellmach and Tyron Montgomery had to move their elaborate sets for Quest to different corners of the building, under the constant threat of expulsion.

Repeatedly, poor Thomas and Tyron Montgomery had to move their elaborate sets for *Quest* to different corners of the building, under the constant threat of expulsion.

As long as our class is kept small, we kind of manage. Currently, we have about ten students spread out over the roughly eight semesters it takes to finish the course. If our popularity rises, because of the second Oscar and this year's "Documenta," an international modern art exhibit which will be held in our back yard, we will have to withdraw even more from the reality of life and focus on what we are good at, the art of make-believe.

Editor's Note: *The one thing that Paul does not directly attribute to the success of Kassel is his teaching methods and experience in animation. To hear what his students say about their education, please refer to "Looking Back on the University Days" in this issue.*

Paul Driessen is an internationally recognized animator, originally from Holland, whose more than 20 short animated films have been screened at festivals and in classrooms around the world. He currently divides his time between teaching at Kassel in Germany, and working with the National Film Board of Canada in Montreal.

An Interactive Teaching Tool Comes to Life: The Acme Virtual Training Network

by Alice Carter

It is 3:00 a.m., and the lights are still on in the animation room at San Jose State University. Rick Servande, Ryan Carlson, Rachel Kane and Martin Gee are making final corrections to the pencil tests they will show to Warner Bros. Feature Animation (WBFA) later that morning. In an adjacent room, more of their classmates are flipping through stacks of animation paper, waiting for their turn to transfer drawings to video tape. It is not unusual for these students to be up so late. The art of animation is demanding, and now that they know what is required to get an industry job, they are willing to put in the extra time. Not only that, they have all been captured by the magic of watching their ideas grow from a single sketch on a piece of paper to an animated test with a life of its own.

This program breaks every educational paradigm in the book and gives students a completely new way to learn..

Three drawings from a student animation sequence.

At 11:30 a.m., all of the tests are finished. The students are sitting behind microphones, watching themselves on a 55" video monitor, and waiting for another adjacent monitor to light-up with the WBFA logo that signals the beginning of another lesson. Welcome to the most unique classroom in the country, the ACME Virtual Training Network. This program breaks every educational paradigm in the book and gives students a completely new way to learn. "A non-traditional classroom" is probably too confining a label for this pilot program which teaches animation to high school and college students across the country simultaneously. The weekly adventure begins for these 40 San Jose State University animation students when they are connected to top animators at the Glendale Studios of Warner Bros. Feature Animation via an interactive closed-circuit television network. Their classmates are spread over thousands of miles, and range in age from fourteen to over fifty and are students in high schools, community colleges, regional occupation programs, and universities.

"Birmingham, are you there?"

A New Day for the Classroom

Katherine Concepcion, ACME VTN producer and training administrator, calls roll.

Alice Carter, coordinator of the San Jose State University animation program, listens to students' questions via interactive video.

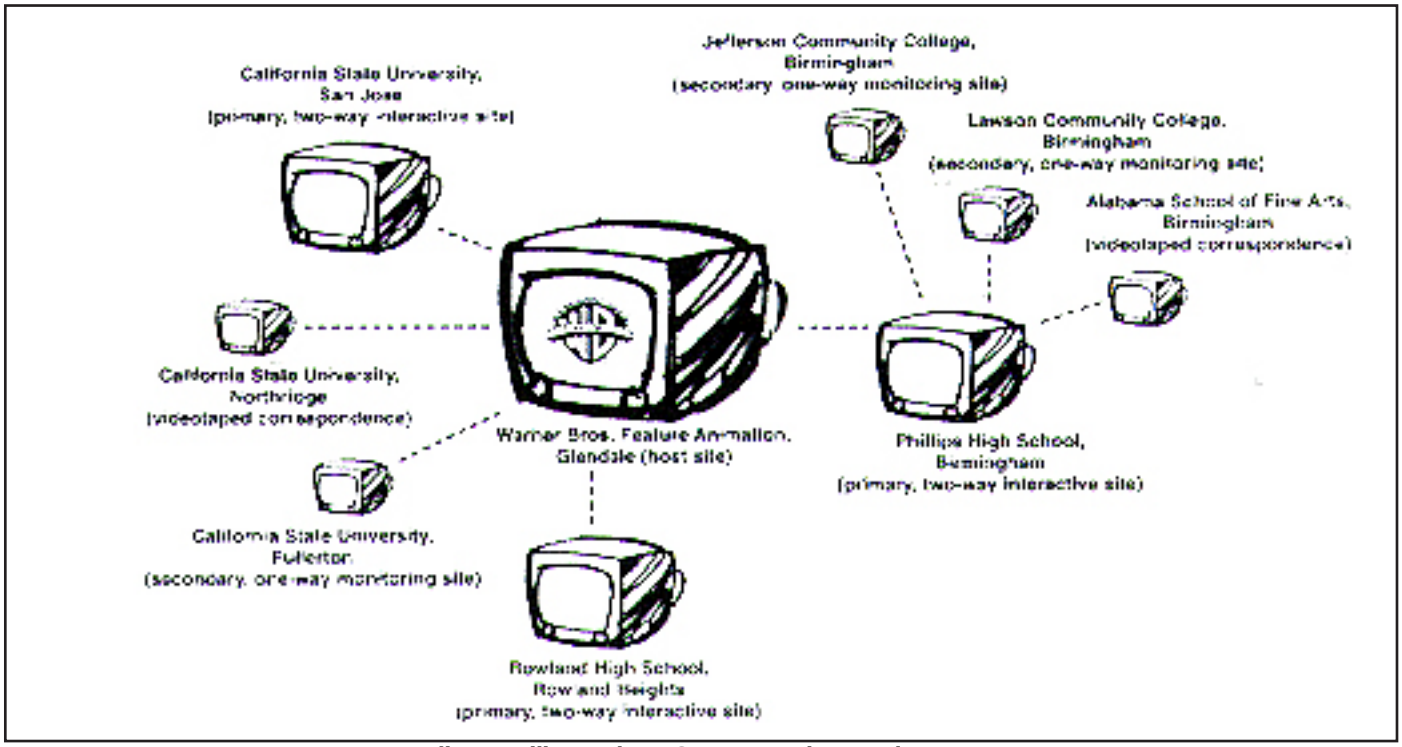
"Birmingham, are you there?" The monitors at all the sites show the classroom at Phillips High School in Birmingham, Alabama. All of the students wave. Concepcion next calls for Rowland High School/ La Puente Regional Occupational Program in Los Angeles. They're online too. The final check is for San Jose State. Everyone is ready to go.

Instructors at all three interactive sites load student tapes into VCRs and the lesson begins. Lenny Graves, an animator currently working on The Quest for Camelot, is forfeiting his lunch hour to review the work. San Jose student Ryan Carlson shows his "human jump" tape. Graves is pleased with the test, but their are a few more corrections to be made. Ryan, who has already filmed this tape over twenty times, has some questions and is anxious to improve his work. Graves sits down at a drawing board and shows everyone how Ryan can improve his tape. Then he moves on to look at the work from Phillips and Rowland. Students at all three interactive sites can then ask questions about each other's work.

"Wherever you go, the gluteus maximus is always behind you."
-Sheldon Borenstein

Warner Bros. animator Jennifer Cardon introduces the next lesson, a review of the "quadruped jump" and "sack pantomime" exercises. Rick Servande shows his "cat jump" tape. The cat's tail still has a life of its own, but the timing is greatly improved, and the volumes are all consistent. Rachel Kane shows her sack pantomime test and has questions. Is the acting clear? Is the timing varied enough? How can the drawings be improved? Cardon answers all of the questions and re-draws the main poses on the white-board so that the whole class can benefit from Rachel's efforts. The animation instruction ends at 1:00 p.m. leaving half an hour for drawing instruction.

Clean-up supervisor Sheldon Borenstein is ACME VTN's resident drawing teacher. If anyone at any of the sites across the country is exhausted by the fast pace and professional demands of the ACME program, Borenstein wakes them up. He is funny and outlandish, and has a talent for presenting difficult information in unforgettable ways. He begins by reminding students to look at the human figure as a series of three dimensional forms. "Make simple shapes," he says. "The cone, the rectangle, the cylinder." Borenstein breaks into song. "Simple shapes," he sings, "simple shapes, everything is made of simple shapes." At 1:30 p.m. the class is over. Nobody knows where the time has gone. Borenstein manages one more piece of drawing advice before the connections are cut. The camera at Warner Bros. zooms in and his face fills the screens at all the schools. "Always remember this one thing," he tells the students. "Wherever you go, the gluteus maximus is always behind you." Everyone laughs as the monitors go black.



A diagram illustrating ACME VTN's interactive set-up.

Student Dedication

At San Jose State University, however, class is not over. Students grab a snack and go back to the classroom for another hour. Professors Alice Carter and Courtney Granner look at student tapes that are still in progress or have problems and collect the fifty new life drawings that are due each week. In three hours, the students will be back in class participating in a life drawing session they have organized themselves to help accelerate their progress. They draw four nights a week and all chip in to cover the cost of the models. Their instructors come in to help and offer suggestions. The long hours have produced results. "It amazes me to look back on my art work, the drawings before I began this program in August," says San Jose State Junior Tammy Manis. "Back then I thought they were pretty good but now I know they weren't. The comparison between then and now is astonishing."

"This program has exceeded all my expectations," says Warner Bros. Feature Animation's director of artist development, and initiator of the program, Dave Master.

Master's Brain Child

In the ACME Virtual Training Network, the pace is sometimes frenetic and the work is challenging, but as this pilot finishes its first year the participants are all pleased. "This program has exceeded all my expectations," says Warner Bros. Feature Animation's director of artist development, and initiator of the program, Dave Master. Master conceived the idea four years ago to help educators provide students with the skills needed to enter the animation field. Once he came up with the idea, he pursued it tirelessly in the face of seemingly overwhelming odds; differences in school calendars, time zones, curriculum requirements all had to be considered. The fears of industry executives unsure about the project's feasibility and educators worried over a radical change in standard teaching procedures also posed potential obstacles. Fortunately for students hoping for a career in animation, Master's enthusiasm for the idea proved to be contagious.

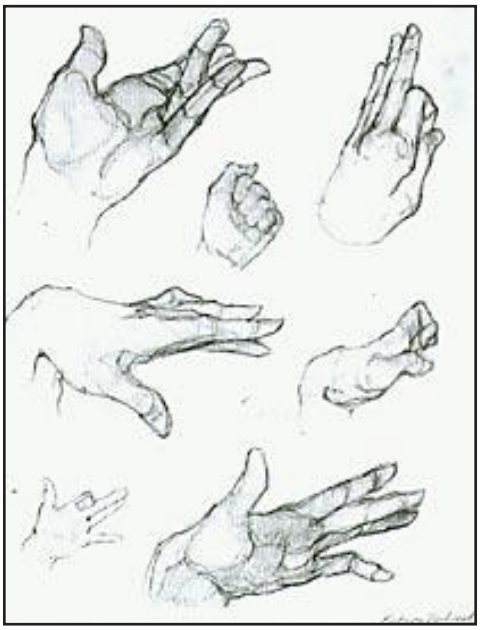
Although there has never been any shortage of talented young artists hoping for

an animation career, there has been widespread confusion about the requirements for entry level positions. ACME VTN has dispelled this confusion for the students involved in the program. They have had the opportunity to work with 22 professional animators, to have their drawings and pencil tests critiqued, and to view professional work. They know just how far they have to go. For San Jose State Junior Ryan Carlson, the program has been the experience of a lifetime, and his enthusiasm about his progress is evident. "I've learned more in the last nine months than at any time before in my life," he says.

"I've learned more in the last nine months than at any time before in my life." - San Jose State University Junior Ryan Carlson

A One Year Anniversary

Everyone involved with the ACME Virtual Training Network is working hard to insure that the program continues. Only a handful of the students in the class are ready to graduate, and the others all look forward to continuing in the program. As with any new endeavor, a lot of unexpected and interesting things have happened during the course of the year. Two sites in California, California State University at Fullerton and California State University at Northridge, did not have interactive access to the transmissions but did have classes auditing the lessons. To increase the involvement of students at the auditing sites, San Jose State, Fullerton, and Northridge went online together every Thursday. Students and faculty at all three sites viewed drawings and tapes and shared their expertise. Guest speakers were invited from Disney and DreamWorks to review work and to show portfolios. Two students from the class at San Jose State University have enjoyed the weekly interaction with the high school students so much that they are considering changing their career plans to include teaching at the high school level. Phillips High School senior Jonathan Gray has applied to San Jose State University. When the San Jose class heard that the ACME veteran from Birmingham might join them in California the whole group applauded.



Life drawings by Katrien Verbiest, a student at San Jose State.

"It's wonderful to come to class and see everyone so excited about their progress." - San Jose State University Junior Rachel Kane.

ACME Virtual Training Network is education at its best. Not only is it a collaborative effort between educators and industry, but it breaks geographic barriers and combines students of all ages into a learning community. The program also gives them an opportunity to work with top professionals and is rigorous in it's demands for excellence and immediate on evaluating results. "Receiving instruction directly from the entertainment industry has truly been the best opportunity of my life," says Junior Rachel Kane. "It's wonderful to come to class and see everyone so excited about their progress." It is this excitement that binds all the participants—students, faculty, school officials, Warner Bros. artists and staff and industry sponsors—into the ACME Virtual Training Network family.

Alice Carter is acting director of the School of Art & Design at San Jose State University, and a participating educator in the ACME VTN program.

Looking Back on the University Days: A Survey of Alumnae

Compiled by Heather Kenyon

What do all the alumnae have to say about their school days? Seize the day! We asked the following questions to a group of alumni and alumnus from some of the world's top animation schools:

- *What did you gain from your education?*
- *What do you feel is the most important thing to take away from one's education?*
- *What do you wish you had done differently?*
- *What advice can you offer animation students in school now?*

Tyron Montgomery, Thomas Stellmach, An Vrombaut, Genndy Tartakovsky, Daniel Wiroth and Luc Otter all replied. Whether these graduates are working on their own independent films or at major studios, they all basically share the same sentiments - during school, you should create and learn all you can. Explore and expand yourself through your films, for you may never have the opportunity again.

Tyron Montgomery *graduated from the animation department at the University of Kassel, where he directed the stop-motion animated film Quest, winner of the 1997 Academy Award for best animated short film. He is now animating and directing on various projects, including a recent commercial at Cod Steaks in Bristol, England.*

"Students from Kassel have won Oscars in 1990 for Balance and in 1997 for Quest. This may give the impression that the Kassel's animation school is a very advanced, top-class institution. But in fact, it isn't. The animation class there has only around ten students, very little equipment, only a few small rooms, and an annual budget of less than $2,700. US dollars (I never know whether I should laugh or cry about this.). There are hardly any formal lectures. If you want to, you can talk to the professors about your projects, if they are around - and that's not very often. So then, what's the secret?

Tyron Montgomery with his 1997 Oscar.

In other schools, where you have lectures and exercises and loads of equipment to play with, students learn something but often forget the most important thing: filmmaking is not about playing around with technology. Filmmaking is about telling stories. Here's one of the advantages of Kassel: the professor of the animation class, Paul Driessen, whose great animated films we all know. He's very good at helping his students to develop the stories for their films. Once

you have a good story, creating interesting pictures and a good soundtrack is not a matter of money or modern technology, but a matter of talent and craftsmanship. A big budget and fancy effects will not make your film any better without a convincing storyline.

The other advantage to Kassel is freedom. In most schools students must finish one film per year and spend most of their time with lectures and exercises. In Kassel no one really cares what you do, so you can really take your time and concentrate on making your films as good as possible, even if you need a few years.

Tyron Montgomery working on set of his Oscar-winning student film, *Quest*.

The fact that the university doesn't teach the students subjects like film language, editing, color design, body language, art history, dramaturgy, etc. . . . is not so important. I've analyzed many films, spoken to filmmakers at festivals, and read loads of books in the library. These events have provided me with a good theoretical base where I could decide for myself what to learn for my own filmmaking process without having to spend time in lessons, learning things I might never need.

My advice to animation students: if you want to become an animator, background artist or some other specialist in the animation industry, stick to your pencil, your computer or whatever tool you need, and learn to use it really well. Nowadays, the industry demands top-quality work. But if you want to become an independent filmmaker, always start with a good story, whether it's your own idea or not. Then try to create interesting pictures, not by using unnecessary effects but by utilizing a well-photographed, well-designed and interesting style. Then try to find sounds and music that match your images and really bring your film to life (sound is a weakness of many animated films). As far as the animation is concerned, good choreography and expressive characters are far more important than technical smoothness.

Quest was filmed with an old Arri camera on an old Russian animation stand. We used old-fashioned models made of wood, polystyrene, and some paint. With the basic elements of story telling, animation, and filmmaking - and of course, love, imagination and patience, we managed to create something special. Actually, Balance is an even better example: half of a ping-pong table, five simple puppets, and a Bolex was all it took [Christoph and Wolfgang Lauenstein] to win an Oscar! Why? Because the film had a good story, an interesting visual style, and simple, but atmospheric, sound. So, wind up your cameras and do it!"

Thomas Stellmach *also graduated from the animation department at the University of Kassel, where he produced the Oscar winning Quest with Tyron Montgomery. Stellmach also created Weeds, a cel animated film, and now runs his own company, Thomas Stellmach Animation.*

"The animation department at the University of Kassel is part of the Visual Communication school. The most important advantage to Kassel is the freedom to choose your field of study, theme and schedule. We can specialize our animation work with the production of our own animated films and obtain practical experience. Our excellent animation professor Paul Driessen gives advice and encourages our productions with his many years of experience in animation.

In regards to animation education, I think it is necessary to learn as much as possible about film, sound and animation techniques. Timing and storytelling are also important as is finding our own possibilities of visualizing one's ideas. I would study again at Kassel, if I had the choice a second time. I would also advise all animation students to come to Kassel and work together."

An Vrombaut *received her MA from the Royal College of Art (RCA) in London. Both her student film, Little Wolf, and subsequent short film, When I Grow Up I Want to be a Tiger, have won awards at festivals around the world. Currently, she is animating a sequence for Dutch animator Piet Kroon's collaborative film, TRANSIT.*

"The best thing about the RCA for me was that I was able to make my film Little Wolf there. Although I could have made Little Wolf anywhere, it would not have been the same film if I hadn't made it at the RCA. Unlike most students, I applied to the RCA with an idea for a specific film already in mind. I had worked in a London studio for a year after my degree course in Belgium, and had done lots of sketches for Little Wolf, so I couldn't wait to get started on the film.

In the beginning there was some resistance at the RCA. The teachers wanted me to experiment on other projects first . After an unhappy first term working on something else, I was finally allowed to start on my film. I spent a lot of time perfecting the animation and looking for a suitable technique. The animation department was very stimulating. There were opportunities to work with people in other departments, an excellent library and, of course, the bonus of being in the middle of London!

I believe that there are two things which all students should try to gain from their education; skills and confidence. Firstly, learn as many practical skills as possible. I learned most of the basic animation skills during my course at KASK in Gent, Belgium. When I was at the RCA, the teaching of practical skills was a bit of a weakness, but this has improved since then. Secondly, build your confidence as a filmmaker. This can only be gained by making personal films."

Thomas Stellmach.

Genndy Tartakovsky *graduated from the California Institute of the Arts character animation department. He is the creator, writer, director, producer of Hanna-Barbera's two time Emmy nominated Dexter's Laboratory. He has also worked on such shows as 2 Stupid Dogs, The Critic, Steven Spielberg Presents Tiny Toons, and Batman: The Animated Series.*

"At CalArts, I gained a greater understanding of the art of character animation by making animated short films myself. I learned all the different aspects of animation, timing, character design, storyboarding, editing and sound design.

The most important thing you can take away from your education is the freedom to express yourself. I feel that a visual forum is very important to develop your own style of filmmaking, and school is the perfect place to explore this.

The best advice that I can give is to really take advantage of your time at school, and try to absorb as many different aspects of animation as possible."

Daniel Wiroth *graduated in 1995 from La Cambre (http://www.awn.com/mag/issue1.9/articles/moins1.9.html) in Belgium. His student film, Crusy Fiction, has won eight film festival prizes, including the Grand Prize at the Brussels Animation Festival. (www.awn.com/brussels) Daniel is currently working on another short film, a love story between a wine glass and a champagne glass, which he expects to complete by December 1997.*

"I studied at La Cambre for five years. The education there is based on a autodidactical system, which means that we are free to create whatever we decide. We are completely free to use and experience all types of stories and animation techniques. The only

important thing is to create one or more short films every year. During my five school years, I experimented with all known animation techniques, and also tested some new ones. For instance, I produced an object animation film in which I animated more than two thousand wine and champagne glasses.

The only advice I can offer to animation students is to create as much as you can. We must search for new techniques and new madness. We have to look for crazy scripts which amaze us and our thoughts must contrast with what exists today."

Genndy Tartakovsky.

Luc Otter *graduated with "great distinction" in 1996 from La Cambre (http://www.awn.com/mag/issue1.9/articles/moins1.9.html) in Belgium. During his five years at the school, he made more than ten short films in various techniques, several of which are touring the festival circuit. Luc is currently working on a short CGI film at Behavior, a young production company in Montreal.*

"I think La Cambre is the only school in Europe where you can learn animation for five years while being completely free and not having to spend too much money. I think these are wonderful, incredible conditions to find yourself in, to experiment and make as many mistakes as possible. Five years gives you the time to do so many different things, and at La Cambre no one can stop you, as long as you are not wasting too much film and the "producers," i.e. teachers, still have a little confidence in you!

The most important thing to take away from your education and to never forget is the feeling of freedom. The dreams and goals you have while in school are what you should remember. You should work toward these goals because achieving them will make you happy and proud. Don't forget your dreams because one day you could find yourself doing something you NEVER wanted to do. You might be in a boring job that doesn't pay well and leaves you with little or no time for your own work. How sad. This is the worst thing that can happen to an artist.

What would I have done differently? Maybe I regret not having worked enough. I am very happy about what I did accomplish at La Cambre but because these years were ABSOLUTE freedom, with hardly any money, time, room or camera problems, I wish perhaps I had taken more advantage of that. I also hope that I will have enough energy to fight for my freedom in my current work. What I would really regret is to not have been able to attend La Cambre.

My advice for animation students is...the only thing that is important is your reel and that is all! If people like your reel they will help you and they will love you!! To have a good reel, do not think too much, just do what you want to do. In school you can be free. Do not listen to things that put you at a distance from what you really want to do. The best films in my school were those that were made in the shadows. The magic of animation is such that no one can say exactly how it works. In school do not think you know how to make a good film. If you know, you should leave school! Instead, try and try and study your experiments and learn the mechanics of cinema and animation. Then use this knowledge to express yourself. The worst and the best of yourself has to get out of you ... and school is the dream place for this."

For a comprehensive list of animation schools around the world, visit the ASIFA list of Animation Schools web site, accessible through the Schools section of AWN's Animation Village (http://www.awn.com)

The State of the Recruiting Nation

Compiled by Heather Kenyon

Everywhere, it seems (including in this issue of AWM), we read of soaring potential in the animation job market. However, is this a true boom or an eventual bust?

Jane Baer (Baer Animation, Burbank, California), Keith Ingham (Walt Disney Animation Canada, Vancouver Studio) Robin Lyons (Siriol Productions, Cardiff, Wales) and Rachel Hannah (Pixar Animation Studios, Richmond, California) shared their insight with us on the following issues:

- *Has the current demand for talent been met by the supply?*
- *What will the needs of the industry be in the future?*
- *What advice can you offer aspiring animation talent as a result?*

The experts' answers all have strong correlations, whether they represent an independent or a major, and regardless of their location—experienced talent is at a premium, and the computer is going to play a large role in the uncertain future. Take heart, however! Everyone agrees that nothing replaces basic, strong drawing skills.

Since our industry is blending its art with technology more and more, we are going to need animators with computer training. - Jane Baer

Jane Baer, Baer Animation

"I don't think that the current demand for talent has been met by the current supply of talent. Really talented and experienced animators are in short supply, as are animators who also have computer training. The large studios have been in "bidding wars" for talented artists and have bid the rates up to the point that smaller studios can't compete.

Since our industry is blending its art with technology more and more, we are going to need animators with computer training. We are also going to need highly experienced computer programmers and technicians to invent and upgrade the computer systems, operate them and keep them functioning.

My advice to aspiring animation talent is to not only hone their artistic talents, but also become proficient in all the various computer programs that are now being used in our industry.

At the present time, we [Baer Animation] are not reviewing portfolios. We will resume reviewing at the beginning of July. Because we are a small studio, we do not have the capacity to train new artists. We look for experienced animation artists with a minimum of 2 years studio experience and strong drawing skills, i.e. life and animal drawings. In other related areas, we look for the following skills: storyboard artists should have all the technical and creative skills essential to boarding, layout artists must reflect a thorough knowledge of animation and perspective drawing, and background artists must have a good color sense along with airbrushing and painting skills. Computer software experience is an added plus."

Keith Ingham, Walt Disney Animation Canada, Vancouver Studio

"The current demand for talented and trained people in the industry still needs to be met. I think the main ingredient that seems to be a premium is experience. We all have to start somewhere, and I think, that regardless of one's expe-

rience, it is most beneficial to approach each job as a chance to learn. This industry needs people who can draw, who are willing to explore new techniques, and who have the patience to hone their craft. Fortunately, it is a good time to find access to many working environments and experiences.

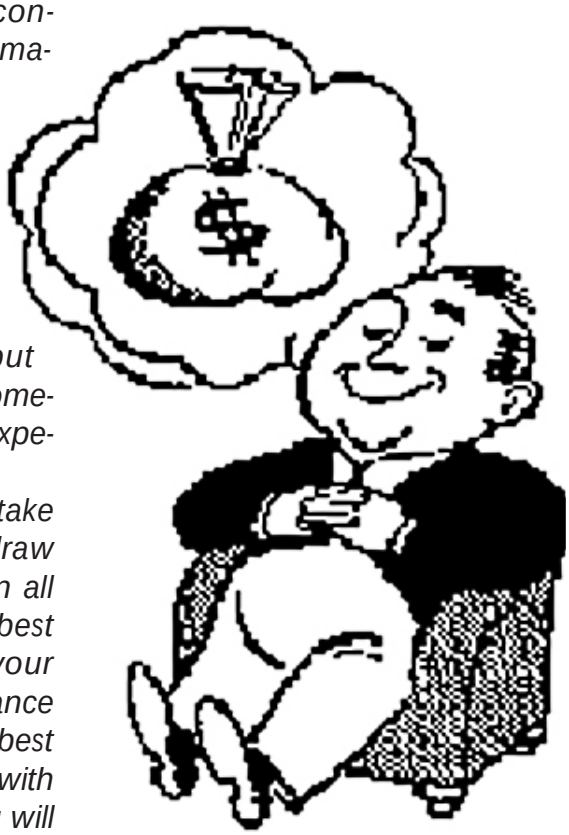
Above all, draw. Always.
- Keith Ingham

The industry's needs in the future, at least on the classical animation side of things, will generally remain the same. We will need storyboard artists, designers, animators, layout artists and writers that understand animation. The finer points of new techniques and systems can be learned along the way because these systems constantly evolve. Technical information that may be helpful is a general understanding of digital paint systems and the digital camera. Varied experience in different aspects of animation production would help add to an overall understanding of how a show is put together. Having once done someone else's job is an invaluable experience.

If you are in school, take advantage of the chance to draw as much as possible and learn all you can. You'll need it. The best advice I can give is to keep your eyes open, and know in advance that the garbage pail is your best friend. Don't be afraid to feed it with all those bad drawings that you will inevitably do in the course of a lifetime at this craft. Learn from others around you. The craft of animation is not a goal to be reached, as much as it is an ongoing artistic development and journey. Keep your ego out of the work, and in doing so, you will let in more experience. Keep your portfolio up to date and don't be afraid to edit out a piece that no longer reflects your advancement as an artist. Above all, draw. Always."

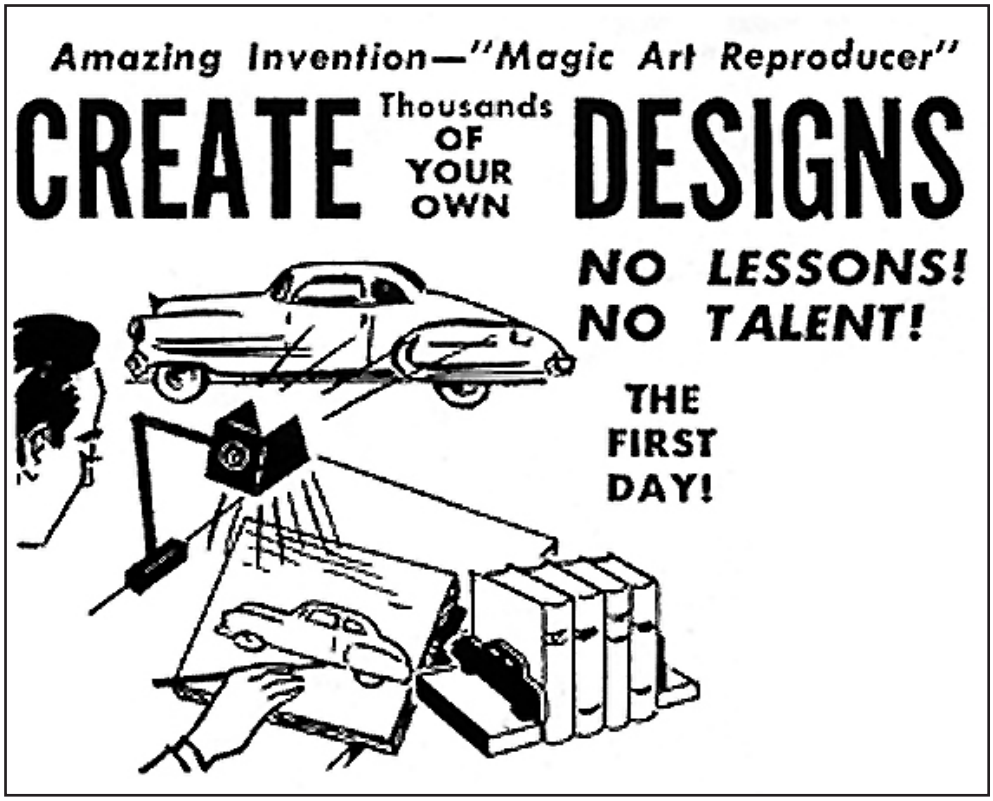
START
DRAWING
BIG MONEY!
LEARN
TO DRAW
AT HOME
MAKE
$30 $50 $75
A WEEK
BE an artist and be your "own boss." You can learn AT HOME in your spare time this simple, practical way. There's a big future in this fascinating and profitable field for men and women of all ages. A few pleasant hours a week should give you the ability to earn good money.
COMMERCIAL ART
CARTOONING AND DESIGN—
ALL IN ONE PRACTICAL COURSE

"The following is what I look for in a person that I am interviewing:



Keep your ego out of the work, and in doing so, you will let in more experience. - Keith Ingham

- *A strong portfolio with solid life drawing and gesture sketches, as well as more evolved pieces. Whenever possible it is helpful to note how long these drawings took to do.*
- *Animal drawings.*
- *A sketch book. This shows that the artist is actively practicing their observational skills.*
- *Please note that all of the above are not drawings from the imagination, but rather from real life. Animation, after all, is an illusion of life.*
- *Drawings that show an understanding of perspective, notably layouts or sketches of architecture.*
- *All of the above should be presented in a neat, uniform format. Never use originals if mailing the portfolio.*
- *A demo reel edited to no more*



than 3-5 minutes. This should be titled and fully labeled with your address. It would also be helpful if there was an accompanying list of contents briefly stating exactly what you have contributed to each piece.

- *Confidence without arrogance.*

The craft of animation is not a goal to be reached as much as an ongoing artistic development and journey.
- Keith Ingham

Robin Lyons,
Siriol Productions, Cardiff, Wales

"In Wales, we have a small, but fairly constant and loyal talent base. Most of the animators working in the area have been trained in our Cardiff studio. Our studio alone can tackle the pre-production of a large series (26 x 26), or the whole production of a small series (26 x 11). I do not know of anyone who has recently left Cardiff to work in either London or the States.

Very few of the colleges in Britain seem to understand the needs of studios like ours. The main problem is that animation is still taught at art colleges, and the average animation graduate has a keen sense of design, but no real drawing or storytelling skills. A couple of colleges at Bournemouth and Pontypridd encourage their students to face the industrial realities of television animation production, but most are content to provide designers for commercials.

To combat this, CARTOON UK has got together with other partners to provide vocational courses for the industry. The British Animation Training Scheme for assistant animators at London's Museum of the Moving Image and The Welsh Animation Training Scheme for key animators, which happens to be at our studio, are included in this program.

We take on a few trainees every year, and the talent base in Wales is slowly expanding. We have recently opened a second studio in Scotland, and I expect our production slate to expand considerably in the next year or so. This should also enable us to take on a number of new trainees.

Animators working for us are paid less than those in London or the States, but working in Cardiff or Glasgow has its compensations. We like to think we look after our staff.

Aspiring animators need to decide whether they want to be penniless independent filmmakers or take on skilled work in a studio. If they choose the latter option, they can do worse than knock on our door."

My advice to an aspiring talent? GET TRADITIONALLY TRAINED!!! - Rachel Hannah

Rachel Hannah,
Pixar Animation Studios

"We've been very successful in hiring talented people. Pixar, like all of the other studios in the industry, has faced the fact that there are not a lot of experienced people available. This results in the need to target younger talent loaded with potential and we have found them. Yes, it's hard to find experienced artists, but there are plenty of talented younger folks available.

It's hard to say what the needs of the future will be. We're seeing a lot of smaller shops folding, many of them in the interactive industry. We're also seeing a lot of studios attempting to take on what Pixar was so successful with—fully animated feature films. The next few years will be interesting, but I estimate that within the next 2 years, most studios will have hired most of their talent.

My advice to an aspiring talent? GET TRADITIONALLY TRAINED!!! Learning how to animate on a computer should come second."

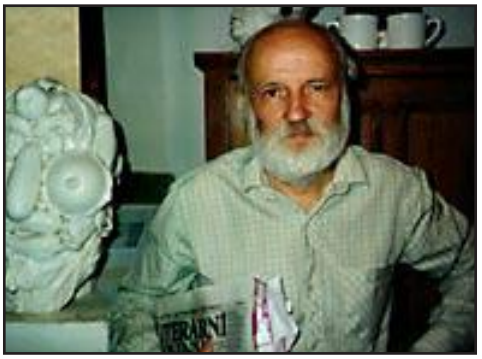
The Surrealist Conspirator: An Interview With Jan Svankmajer

by Wendy Jackson

Jan Svankmajer has been called one of the most distinctive and influential contemporary Czech filmmakers. Since the mid-1960s, his films have shocked, mesmerized, repulsed and delighted audiences, amassing international cult-like followings and inspiring countless other artists and even imitators. His countryman and contemporary, director Milos Forman has described Svankmajer famously with the equation: "Disney plus Buñuel equals Svankmajer." Upon elaboration, Forman's recipe would be expanded to include the influence of Breton, Eisenstein, Fellini, Freud and a handful of Surrealists, probably the very least amount of which would be Disney.

Svankmajer was born in Prague, Czechoslovakia in 1934, coincidentally the very same year that the Czech Surrealist Group was formed, an organization with which he is very involved. In his 63 years in what is now the capitalist Czech Republic, he has seen the come and go of six different political regimes and their corresponding, often conflicting ideologies. While his work is noticeably political in content, Svankmajer is quick to point out that he maintains an inherent commentary and perspective which is not tied to any particular school of thought. There is a universality to his films which speaks to people from all cultures and beliefs.

Stylistically, Svankmajer's films are unforgettable in their richness and diversity of technique. Live-action, puppets, collage, drawn animation, montage, clay and object stop-motion animation mingle together in harmony and contrast throughout his body of work, which includes nearly 30 films, ranging in length from 20 seconds to 95 minutes. While a majority of these films have been animated, Svankmajer refuses to be classified as an animated filmmaker, or for that matter, as any particular type of artist. "Animators tend to construct a closed world for themselves, like pigeon fanciers or rabbit breeders." Svankmajer stated in an interview, "I never call myself an animated filmmaker because I am interested not in animation techniques or creating a complete illusion, but in bringing life to everyday objects."



Jan Svankmajer at his Prague studio in 1994. On the left is one of his ceramic "composite head" sculptures. Photo courtesy of Wendy Jackson.

And bring life to everyday objects is exactly what Svankmajer does. One could almost make a dictionary of objects as symbols in Svankmajer's films, something akin to Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams.* From fish to rolling pins, to keys, stones and wardrobe closets, objects usually trapped in the banality of life take on new meanings as metaphors for emotions and ideas.

Persistence of Vision

While Svankmajer has been subject of much discussion and admiration within the independent film community, public recognition of his accomplishments have been limited. A retrospective of his work and subsequent winning of the Grand Prize for his film *Dimensions of Dialogue* at the 1983 Annecy Animation Festival is often attributed to the beginning of an international interest in his films.

Fourteen years and twelve films later, the San Francisco International Film Festival (SFIFF), in its 40th year, decided to honor Svankmajer with The Golden Gate Persistence of Vision Award, a new award to recognize lifetime achievement of filmmakers who are "working outside the bounds of traditional filmmaking."

One of the magic geniuses of Svankmajer is his ability to turn film, a strictly audio-visual medium, into a sensual, nearly synesthetic experience.

Peter Scarlet, the festival's creative director, presented the award to Svankmajer on May 6, 1997 at the Kabuki Theater in San Francisco. He told the audience that the most hate mail the festival had ever received was concerning the screening of a Svankmajer film a few years ago. While this is not the most likely precedent to the presentation of an award, the packed house in the

Kabuki theater indicated a strong local appetite for Svankmajer's films. Director Henry Selick (*The Nightmare Before Christmas, James and the Giant Peach*) also spoke at the presentation, citing the influence Svankmajer has had on his work.

SFIFF sponsored Svankmajer's visit to San Francisco for the occasion, which was accompanied by sold-out screenings of his short films and the North American premiere of his new feature film, *Conspirators of Pleasure.* Not exactly known for being a "social butterfly", Svankmajer said at the awards presentation that he had been asked so many questions since his arrival in San Francisco, that he felt like he had been tossed into a washing machine on the spin cycle. I was fortunate enough to be one of those people asking questions, and honored to have an opportunity speak with Svankmajer at length and in his own language. Though I had met Svankmajer before, I had only been able to attempt communication through my limited understanding of the Czech language. This time around, however, I was able to conduct an in-depth interview with the assistance of an interpreter.

I asked Svankmajer for his reaction to receiving this Persistence of Vision award, to which he replied that he liked the name of the award, and added "I am happy to accept this, because it is not a government award. I will not accept government awards. The Communists wanted to give me a laureate award, but I declined!"

Conspirators of Pleasure

Svankmajer's latest film is a masterpiece of black humor and observation of the human condition. Described as a "sexual feast" of a film, *Conspirators* presents six characters and their bizarre sexual fetish-fantasies. At once kinky, grotesque and hilarious, the film brings us into the secret, very personal lives of ordinary people: apartment-dwellers, a newscaster, a magazine vendor, and a postal delivery person. If you enjoy rituals such as stuffing bread balls in your nose or having your toes sucked by fish, you're not alone!

One of the magic geniuses of Svankmajer is his ability to turn film, a strictly audio-visual medium, into a sensual, nearly synesthetic experience. With all of his films, *Conspirators* in particular, one can practically taste, smell and feel the settings. His use of exaggerated, hyper-real sound effects and quick, Eisenstein-esque editing accentuate visuals which are already uncanny.

The physicality of *Conspirators* bears an overall resemblance to the work he created during a seven-year recess from filmmaking, imposed on him after references to politics were found in "unauthorised" changes he made to his 1972 film, *Leonardo's Diary.* From 1972-79, he focused on sculpture, ceramics, poetry and other static art forms, resulting in a body of work he refers to as his "tactile experiments," wherein something as simple as a rolling pin covered in nails and animal fur explores contrasts that awaken the senses. The following is a love poem of sorts, titled "Economical Suicide," written by Svankmajer in 1979 and dedicated to his wife Eva (a painter and sculptor herself).

Spread your fingers as far apart as possible
Place between them the grain of a pea
Endure
Knees kneeling down on a grater
Endure
Slip a sucking sweet in your mouth
Suck
Your back pressed against the smooth concrete of
a laundry
Endure
One's heels placed into the outflow by the bath
just as the plug has been pulled
Endure
Calves painted with egg yolk
let it dry
and endure
Run water in the basin
Shoes off
Dip your face
Endure

Wendy Jackson (WJ): I was struck by the similarities *Conspirators of Pleasure* had with the tactile experiments you produced in the 1970s. Was the film developed at that time?

Jan Svankmajer (JS): "This script for this movie was conceived in 1970, under a different title. I started with my tactile experimentation and explorations just a little bit later, in 1974 or so. So in actuality, the tac-

From a collaborative tactile poem created by Jan Svankmajer and his wife, Eva.

tile experiments entered into this film only when I was actually working on it, in 1996."

WJ: Would it bold to say that *Conspirators of Pleasure* is your most Surrealist film to date?

JS: "You are absolutely correct about that. That's what I say about this film, that it definitely has the strongest element of Surrealism in it."

WJ: Why?

JS: "Conspirators is actually a film about liberation, and about gaining a freedom. It is not art, but a film. Just as, for example, André Breton would not say "Surrealistic painting", he would say "Surrealism in painting". In the same way, I speak of Surrealism in film. Surrealism is psychology, it is philosophy, it is a spiritual way, but it is not an aesthetic. Surrealism is not interested in actually creating any kind of aesthetic. It was drawn as an element from various different artists, but it does not exist."

"To characterize Surrealism, you can say it is the Romantic movement of the 20th century. Each romantic period expresses three elements: love, freedom and poetry."

WJ: How can something so prevalent in your work be nonexistent?

JS: "Surrealism does exist, but it is not an art form. To characterize Surrealism, you can say it is the Romantic movement of the 20th century. Each romantic period expresses three elements: love, freedom and poetry. Each generation is seeking their own artistic expressions according to the environment and the time period they live in. The Romanticism of the 21st century will ask the same question. It doesn't matter whether that Romanticism will be Culturalism, or something else."

Fantasy-realization scene from *Conspirators of Pleasure*, featuring a life-size puppet.

WJ: In this film, you reserved the technique of animation for the actualization of the characters' fantasies. What is the role that animation plays in this limited capacity?

JS: "The animation is mostly used in the sequences where the character creates an artificial [sexual] partner. The point of view of the activity of these people is taken from a distance, or as to be viewed by a third person. But the relationship of the two people who actually fabricate their partners (each other), is done from the point of view of a living human being, of one's partner. I was hesitating for a long time as to whether I should do it this way or to do it as the other parts of the film are done, meaning, so that it would be viewed as more than just the relationship between the two of them. Then I realized that the individuals did not really seek a living creature, but an effigy, an artificial partner. To make these things alive, I could do it only by animation. Therefore, I stepped out of the third person point of view, and put it into the context of the characters' own point of view."

WJ: Do you think that this made those fantasies more real? Is this the "real animation" that you have referred to?

JS: "You can see in that the figures have been sewn together by hand, that they are objects. I also work with many other objects in my film. In this particular instance, it's a little different because the individual who works with the figurine can actually do things to it, all kinds of violent actions, and you can see the effects. For instance, the character wearing the rooster head and umbrella wings is transformed by the costume. He is gaining totally different

powers, to fly and perform magic, etc. . . As soon as he hits the branch and the mask comes off, he is immediately just this little human being, devoid of his powers."

WJ: In your view, do you think that any of the characters in the film are aware of their fascination with each other?

JS: "It was my intention that there would be certain elements in their behavior that would create recognition among them. They were not supposed to be known to each other, but something would happen that would trigger the recognition that they are part of the same group of people. For example, when a gay person can recognize another gay person because of certain elements, there is something [intangible], a communication which can trigger that recognition. Times of self pleasuring or "auto-sex" do not require communication. The two main characters are communicating secretly, not directly. They are in fact isolated, but at the same time, they are conspirators."

Two "conspirators of pleasure" sense eachother's bizarre sexual fetishes.

WJ: In *Faust* and now in *Conspirators*, you have increased the size of your marionettes. While you cite Czech tradition in your use of marionettes, large scale puppets are something of your own unique creation. What does the life-size marionette represent?

JS: "I wouldn't want to overstate the importance or significance of this. The intention was that I wanted to get the marionettes into reality, and therefore I had to increase their size, so that they could function in a correct ratio to the actors, to interact with them. The marionettes exist also in small size in a miniature theater. That way I manage to make the viewer very insecure about the size. One moment you can see them very small, when they are led by a human hand, and in another you see them in life size. So, we are actually approaching a different dimension of reality."

WJ: You have said that Charles Bowers is "your immediate predecessor in relation to reality and real animation." When did you first see his films?

JS: "The first time I saw Bowers films was in the Seventies, even after I had completed my film The Flat. There are two Bowers films in the Czech Film Archive. After the director of this archive saw my films, he contacted me and said "I have something here that you might be interested in." So I went down and saw the films, and I realized that he was my predecessor in what I was doing, because he was mixing animation and live-action 50 years before I started filmmaking. But we are talking in the terms of technique, not content. The content of our respective work is very different."

WJ: Do you think that once you'd seen Bowers' work, that it influenced you at all?

JS: "No, not necessarily. I never declared myself to be the inventor of this combination of live acting and animation. I was just very pleased that there was someone a long time before me that had the same idea, and it worked for him too."

WJ: Up until *Alice* and then *Faust*, you were working almost entirely with animation. How does it feel for you to work with live actors? You have much less control over them, I would think, than you have of inanimate objects.

JS: "I have to admit that I work with actors exactly as I work with inanimate objects. I don't select my actors as to whether they are famous, or "good actors", rather I select actors who fit in the vision that I have for that particular picture. Then I work with them and I use the camera to photograph them as inanimate objects. Sometimes I even animate the actors, as I did in Faust."

WJ:You are very versatile in your filmmaking and other art, with the use many different techniques. Can you tell me something about your process for determining which medium should be employed to communicate or express a particular idea?

JS: "I always say that I basically make my work "to order", by which I mean to my "inner order". It is really inside me, what's going to come out. The way I see it, each individual accumulates in his or her lifetime. That which accumulates inside him or her needs to find a way out. Basically, everybody can do that, but most people do not find a way of releasing it, they have certain blockage. There is no such thing as talent."

WJ: No such thing as talent? That is a bold statement.

JS: "It's very simple. The artist is able to reach their resources, and overcome the block. But a clerk who sits in the office, obviously, has his blockage and cannot. This so-called "professionalism", is much more a matter of technique, or skill than creativity. You can see that in naive art, or folk art, if an individual wants to express him or herself, they find a way to do it if they really want to."

WJ:You grew up in a time of such oppression of creativity and self-expression. How is it that you are so "lucky" as to not have this block, that you are able to realize your potential to express yourself through art?

"I consider all of my films to be very politcally engaged. But I never narrowed it down to a totalitarian system, the way, for example, the artist dissident would."

JS: "It's a difficult question to answer. I believe there is a lot to it, including family influences. Certain children are just very difficult to handle. I was one of these children (laughs). For example, all children can draw. Some of them retain this ability until adult age, while in other children the ability is subsequently killed."

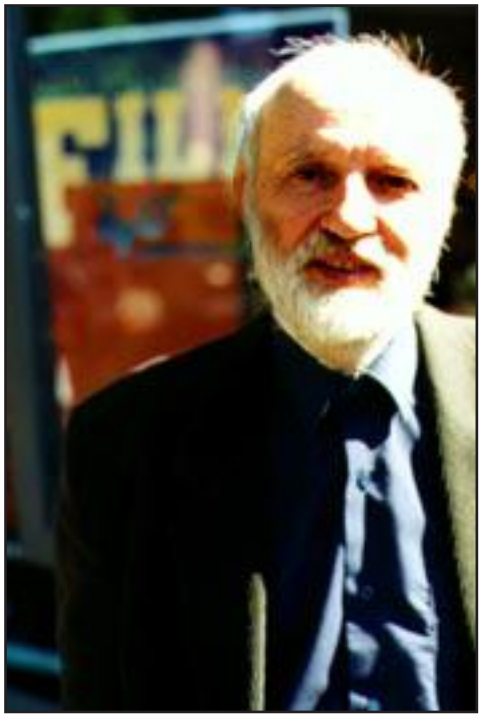
Svankmajer and his crew filming a scene in *Conspirators of Pleasure*.

WJ: It's been about seven years since you made your cathartic film, *The Death of Stalinism in Bohemia,* following the demise of Communist rule in your country. Now you have your freedom. How has this changed your content, your message? Who or what is your antagonist now?

JS: "I would like to say that I consider all of my films to be very politically engaged. But I never narrowed it down to a totalitarian system, the way, for example, the artist dissident would. Because I realize that civilization does allow for the creation or existence of something as sick as Fascism or Stalinism, then the entire civilization itself is very ill, something is wrong. I always wanted to penetrate the core of this problem. Not to just concentrate on the very surface of political activity. Therefore, my films are universal, they can communicate with audiences outside of the Czech Republic. So, just because the political situation changed in Czechoslovakia, doesn't mean that the universe or the civilization changed at the same time. As far as I was concerned, there was no reason to change my enemy. It will always be the same."

WJ: What is next for you?

JS: "My next project is a feature film called Otesánek, which is a word that cannot be translated. It's a very old Czech fairy tale. Although it is a story little known outside of Czech culture, it will be accessible to people who have never heard it before, because the original fairy tale will be taught in the film. There will be a dialogue in the film, unlike Conspirators, which is without lan-



Jan Svankmajer at the San Francisco International Film Festival, May 1997. Photo by Wendy Jackson.

guage.

"It will be a live-action film, set in the present day, [edited] in parallel with an animated film depicting the story of the original Czech fairy tale on which the entire film is based. The animation will be something like paper figurines that come to life and tell the original story. The screenplay is completed, and I'd like to start pre-production sometime in the fall. We are looking for financing, and hopefully next spring we can start filming. It will be filmed in Prague; it all takes place in one house.

"*Otesánek* is a story about a couple who can't have children, so the father goes in the backyard he carves a little baby boy out of a tree stump. The story is that the boy grows and grows, and eats and eats, and he cannot fit in the house anymore. He is always hungry; he eats everything in sight, the postman, and ultimately he eats his parents. There is a little girl who lives in the house with this character. They become friends, and she actually helps him to get the people that he can eat. She's the only one who actually manages to establish communication with him; she understands what is going on because of this little fairy tale that she's got in her book. She can, in fact, foretell the future, because she knows from the parallel story in her book what's going to happen.

"The story ends very tragically, because the main character is killed. The little girl knows from the fairy tale that this is going to happen, and she does everything in her power to prevent it, because he is her friend. The movie ends in the same way the story ends, a tragic ending in which the grandmother goes into the cellar with an ax to kill the character. The scene at the end of the film shows the little girl crying, and begging her not to kill him.

"This civilization is based on rationality, totalitarianism that is, and anything that is outside of this particular point or reference of reality, is difficult to comprehend and is therefore pushed away."

WJ: Has this some inspiration from the traditional Eastern European story of "The Golem"?

JS: "Yes, it is similar in that it is a horror fairy tale that will scare little children. But in this instance, I am giving it a more philosophical dimension, because you can substitute this main character as a metaphor for all kinds of things. It will be a combination of black humor, imagination, and fairy tale. It will be told as a black humor, with elements of reality."

WJ: When you describe that, I envision you literally mixing black humor, imagination and fairy tale in some kind of cauldron. Rightly, you are often referred to as the "alchemist" of film.

JS: "Yes, alchemy is about trying to connect things that you cannot connect, that are "un-connectable". Poetry is a parallel for alchemy, and alchemy is a parallel for poetry."

Some of Svankmajer's work is currently on exhibit at the National Gallery in Prague, as part of an installation about alchemy, organized with four people in the Czech Surrealist Group. *Conspirators of Pleasure* is being distributed worldwide by Paris-based Celluloid Dreams, and in the U.S. by Zeitgeist Films, who plan a video release after a theatrical run at art house theaters across the country, beginning with an August 20 opening at Film Forum in New York.

Interview translator: Zuzana Goldstein.

See Also:

The Animation of Heaven and Hell in 3-D web site (http://www.awn.com/heaven_and_hell) in AWN's Animation Village features extensive information, a filmography and film clips.

The Czech Surrealist Group web site (http://www.terminal.cz/~surreal) offers Svankmajer's videotapes and related books for sale, through the online extension of the Gambra Surrealistic Gallery in Prague.

Dark Alchemy: The Films of Jan Svankmajer, edited by Peter Hames. Greenwood Press (U.S.), Flicks Books (U.K.), 1995. 202 pages, illustrated.

Wendy Jackson is Associate Editor of Animation World Magazine.

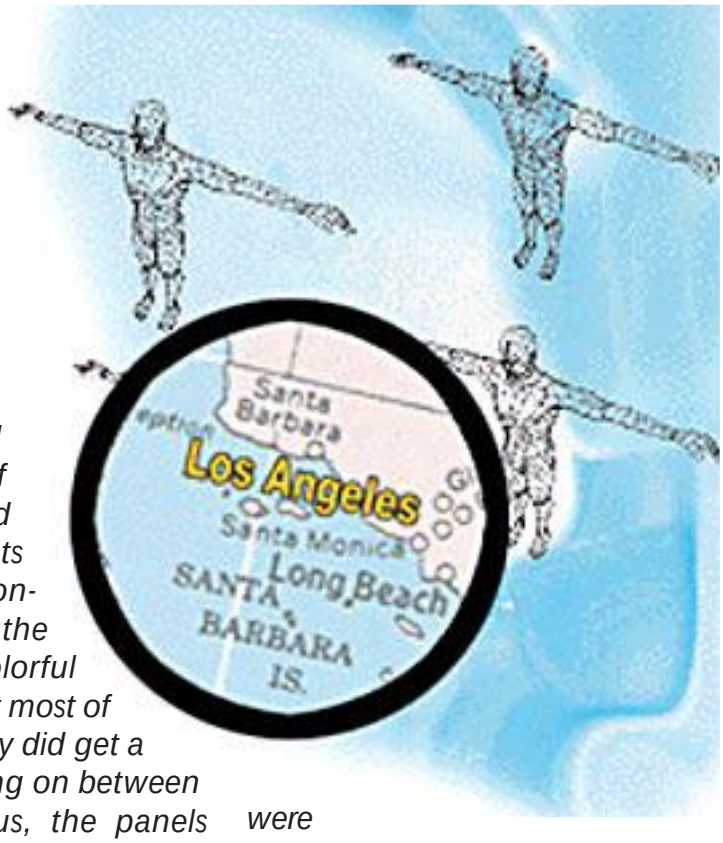
The First NATPE Animation & Special Effects Expo (ANIFX)

Event review by Heather Kenyon and Wendy Jackson

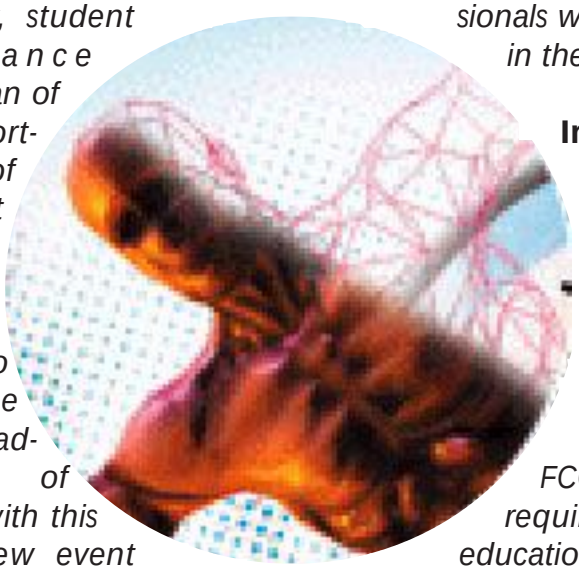
NATPE's First Animation and Special Effects Expo (ANIFX) drew a limited number of participants in its first year. While activity on the floor was definitely quiet, some of the panels lead to lively discussions. Topics that are sometimes brushed over were discussed in detail and in a candid fashion.

Event organizers boasted a registration of over 2,000 after the first day, but the lull on the showroom floor indicated that perhaps most of the participants attended the panel discussions. Exhibitors and panelists definitely made use of the opportunity to interact in a more relaxed setting rather than the frantic pace of NATPE's other annual convention.

The event's "Career Center" was spare, probably more reflective of the present lull in animation industry recruiting and lack of company, student attendance rather than of any shortcoming of the event itself. Overall, timing seemed to be the great disadvantage of NATPE, with this brand new event taking place so shortly after the World Animation Celebration in Pasadena, and on the cusp of the Annecy Animation Festival, the "big daddy" of world animation events.



Despite the rather meager attendance, ANIFX presented a fine selection of panel discussions and seminars, most of which featured impressive panelists and interesting content. What made the sessions more colorful than usual was that most of the moderators truly did get a friendly banter going on between their panelists. Plus, the panels included some new faces who were happy to express their points of view, as well as seasoned professionals who know every trick in the book.



Insightful Seminars

For instance, Thursday's Children's Programming: Contents Under Pressure delved into sensitive areas regarding the new FCC regulations that require three hours of educational programming a week on US networks. Jean MacCurdy and Margaret Loesch were especially insightful as they outlined how the changes would influence their respective networks. The fact that guidelines to the FCC's mandates are not clearly defined is a frustrating challenge. As DIC's Robby London says, "The government is like a bad parent...we don't know how to act in order to avoid getting sent to our room." Does a show that encourages kids to read entertaining books educational? Or to qualify must a show contain strong educational messages? All of this has been left up to the network heads to decide. The entire panel agreed that while the average parent is not upset with current children's programming, certain special interest groups are. By turning the respon-

sibility of policing programming over to the children's industry executives, parents are thus excusing themselves from having to actively participate in viewing with their children.

Another frightening aspect of this change for the networks is that the FCC does not have jurisdiction over cable, and hence, if network television becomes too educational, it will push fun-seeking kids even further into the world of Nickelodeon and Cartoon Network. The forced "volunteerism" of this program has everyone wondering how long it will be before someone says, "Enough is enough."

On Saturday, the Writers Guild of America Animation Writers Caucus presented a panel discussion entitled *Getting Your Toon on the Air.* It was noted that in this time of increased competition for viewers among the many network and cable programming outlets, there are fewer risks being taken with animation. The definition of a "good rating" is now a two or a three, whereas it used to be a around a thirteen. "The days of 'here's my idea—let's figure it out together' are over," said John Goldsmith, an agent and producer with the Gotham Group and Metropolis Animation. "Those kinds of things end up in 'development motel', where you might check in but never really check out." Kaaren Lee Brown of Bohbot Entertainment noted that while "It is harder to get things on the air. . . . it is easier to *keep* them on the air."

The lively discussion echoed with the idea that perseverance and resourcefulness are key in pitching an idea. Rob Hudnut, co-creator of *Captain Simian & The Space Monkeys,* recalled that *The Blanket,* his new home video series for children, was turned down 15 times before it was signed. Brown, representing the syndication market's point of view, said "A three-page treatment, a well-defined character, and two or three pieces of art is enough for us. Then we'll option it and take it from there." While all agreed that the marketplace is tough for the independents today, Goldsmith offered the suggestion that when making any kind of pitch, one should "have great writing, an animation director attached, and a deep-pocketed producer or investor attached."

Animation World Network hosted two panels as well. Both *Copyrights, Contracts and Royalties: Legal Aspects of Programming Distribution on the Internet* and *Pipeline, Tools and Content: Using the Internet as a Broadcast Medium* were very well received.

The Future of ANIFX

Perhaps panels and discussions is where this NATPE event should focus its strength for next year. The sentiment is that a lot of the "biggies" stayed away because they were unsure of this conference's focus and how it differs from NATPE's large January event. In the fast-paced, high-cost business of trade shows, it seems unfair to expect animation companies to put on two trade shows a year in order to sell product. However, this event may become a premier place to discuss the hurdles and challenges facing our industry. NATPE should examine how they want this event to relate to the one in January and what they hope to achieve with this new affair. Currently, the industry's lack of enthusiasm for the event would suggest that it doesn't have much need for it. Of course, then again, in twenty years it may be the largest market in the world and we will all look back, and brag, "Well, you know *I* was at the first one...."

Heather Kenyon is Editor-in-Chief of Animation World Magazine.

Wendy Jackson is Associate Editor of Animation World Magazine.

Mouse Under Glass: Secrets of Disney Animation and Theme Parks

Book review by Susan Palmer

How many can say they have never seen a Disney film? The number is small, but still, there probably are some who are the phenomenal few. In case anyone has been asleep for the past 50 years, David Koenig's new book, Mouse Under Glass: Secrets of Disney Animation and Theme Parks, will fill them in on the story-lines and fun facts of Disney's animated and live-action feature films. For those who are already acquainted with these films, this book will let them in on something new, an inside look at the origin of the stories, intended and unintended bloopers and how the films have been translated into rides at Disney amusement parks worldwide.

"Disney's formula seems simple enough, but then you realize that no one else has been able to duplicate their success. Watch another studios animated features, visit other amusement parks, and you get a sense something's missing.. . . They don't *feel* Disney."

Koenig seems to have a great amount of respect for Disney's complex animated films. "Disney's formula seems simple enough," he writes, "but then you realize that no one else has been able to duplicate their success. Watch another studios animated features, visit other amusement parks, you get a sense something's missing. . . .They don't feel Disney." However, Koenig likes to nit-pick and dwell upon the smallest details.

The Secret's in the Story

Written in an easy to read, factual style, Mouse Under Glass takes the reader through 30 Disney features, from Felix Salten's Bambi: A Life in the Woods to Pocahontas. Each chapter begins with the synopsis of the original story concept and then Koenig takes us step-by-step through the plot of the Disney tale from beginning to signature end. The book takes a very analytical approach to questions that I am sure have perplexed us all, such as "Why doesn't Dopey (Snow White) talk?" However, the book is also full of quizzes, nuggets of Disney history and juicy tidbits from Disney's elite group of theme park designers, the Imagineers. Koenig mentions time and time again that the secret to Disney animation is the story. He cites how well everything is planned and then questioned again and again until the story is perfectly honed.

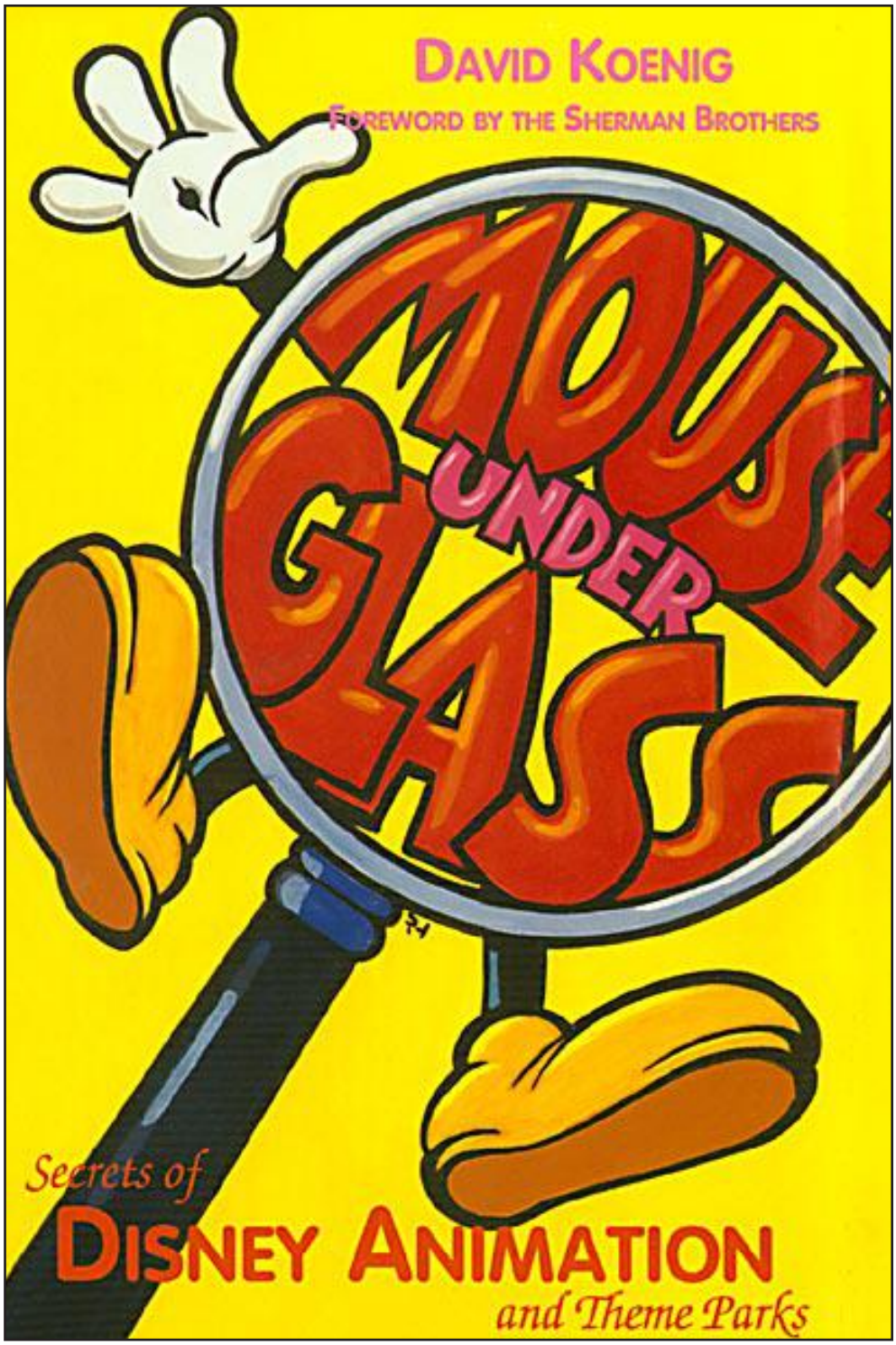
However, while praising their mastery of story-telling, Koenig includes in each chapter a section called "Plot Holes." Some of the holes aren't necessarily plot-driven, but rather revolve around facts such as Dick Van Dyke occasionally losing his cockney accent in Mary Poppins and that Who Framed Roger Rabbit is set in 1947, but features characters that weren't created in this world until after that date. Each chapter also contains an attack on the animation called "Bloopers." Koenig makes some far reaches to conclude that animators' mistakes hinder the stories. In a chapter on Beauty and the Beast, he complains "When Gaston arrives at Belle's house to propose, the cottage door opens out and is left open as they walk across the room. Soon after, Gaston backs Belle against the door, which has somehow closed, but she opens the door out and slips away, so Gaston falls through. Belle pulls the door shut, then quickly opens the door in and tosses out his boots." Upon viewing a film, animated or live action, one hopes to have such a great story that the human error factor will not interfere. No film made, animated or live-action, is 100% blooper-free. This kind of gripe seems trivial and unnecessary when doors have been known to swing both ways.

In Who Framed Roger Rabbit, for instance, the infamous "dirty" frames featuring the Jessica Rabbit character sans underwear is visible for only three frames, or, one eighth of a second.

Hidden Images

Not all of the bloopers are

bad though. The most intriguing sections of *Mouse Under Glass* are the guided tours of the "hidden stuff" which can be found in selected films. Under close scrutiny, the educated viewer will find many racy images, caricatures of animators, and saucy words, implanted by many a clever animator. Be warned, however; to find these sequences, one must be quick of the eye and fast on the VCR pause button. In *Who Framed Roger Rabbit,* for instance, the infamous "dirty" frames featuring the Jessica Rabbit character sans underwear is visible for only three frames, or, one eighth of a second. In a less controversial sequence in *The Little Mermaid,* animators inserted split-second cameo appearances from Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck and Goofy appearing at the entrance to King Triton's underwater palace. These little-known "bloopers" are a real treat to watch.



For those who are already aquainted with these films, this book will let them in on something new...how the films have been translated into rides at Disney amusement parks worldwide.

Overall, *Mouse Under Glass* is a good entertainment guide to Disney films. It doesn't conquer tough questions or capture the essence of what makes Disney special. It does, however, have lots of neat facts. If you are a Disney fanatic, you will probably learn some new trivia that is not widely publicized and enjoy the book. If you have seen just a few of the films, rent one and then sit back with the book and enjoy the tour. But remember, you will need the book in one hand, and the VCR controller in the other to catch the slightly outrageous! If you are caught with the TV screen frozen on one of the more suggestive frames, just remember to say it's in the name of education and in the interest of art.

Mouse Under Glass: The Secrets of Disney Animation and Theme Parks by David Koenig. Bonaventure Press, 1997. 270 pages, illustrated. Hardcover, $23.95; ISBN: 0-9640605-0-7.

Susan Palmer is a freelance writer and an animator/illustrator living in Los Angeles, CA.

Suggested Reading

The following is a list of selected books which are of interest to the aspiring animator. This presents merely a sampling of the numerous animation-related books which have been published.

Reference

The Complete Guide to Computer Graphics and Animation Schools by Ernest Pintoff. Watson-Guptill Publications.
A must-have for anyone investigating education options in the United States. Comprehensive indices are accompanied by insightful words of wisdom written by more than 50 key figures in animation.

Muybridge's Complete Human and Animal Locomotion, Volumes I and II by Eadward Muybridge.
These timeless essentials for any animator feature classic pre-cinema motion-study photographs of humans and animals.

Technique

Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain by Betty Edwards. S&S Trade Publishers.
Perhaps the most widely used "self-help" guide to realistic drawing.

The Vilppu Sketch Book by Glenn Vilppu. Available through the American Animation Institute.
The life drawing bible, according to many students of this master teacher.

The Animation Book by Kit Laybourne. Crown Publishers.
An information-rich guide to the processes involved in creating animated films by your own means.

The Animator's Workbook by Tony White.
A collection of exercises for the practicing animator to hone his or her craft.

History

Cartoons: One Hundred Years of Cinema Animation by Giannalberto Bendazzi. Indiana University Press. (www.awn.com/whole-toon)
The definitive history text on international and independent animation.

Disney Animation: The Illusion of Life by Frank Thomas and Ollie Johnston. Abbeville Press (out of print).
Written by two of Disney's most adored "Nine Old Men", this book is a dense volume of rare illustrations and production notes that are fascinating even to those who are not especially fans of Disney animation.

Animation From Script to Screen by Shamus Culhane.
A collection of stories and anecdotes from one of the industry's most prolific talents and beloved personalities.

Chuck Amuck by Chuck Jones. Farrar Straus Giroux Publishers.
A colorful autobiography of the lively career of the Warner Bros. cartoon director, creator of many adored classic characters.

What are your favorite animation books? Let us know, write to editor@awn.com.

Video Reviews

by Wendy Jackson

A Celtic Trilogy

Portland-based animator Rose Bond has independently released a videocassette of her films. The collection, titled *A Celtic Trilogy,* includes three hand-made films, *Deirdre's Choice, Macha's Curse,* and *Cerridwen's Gift.* At 48 minutes, the reel is in itself an impressive accomplishment, especially when one takes into consideration the fact that Bond creates the images frame-by-frame in a painstaking process of painting and drawing directly onto the surface of clear 35mm film. The fact that she can tell dramatic stories and portray illustrative images and fluid movement upon such a small canvas is even more amazing. The beginning of the tape includes a six minute documentary on the technique as well as the cultural context of the stories.

Rose Bond.

All three of the films are based on narratives derived from traditional Celtic tales and Irish literature. Depicting headstrong women and goddesses with a feminist sensibility, these films provide a promising alternative to heroines in traditional animated films; Deidre, Macha and Cerridwen are certainly better role models than any Belle, Pocahontas or Jezebel.

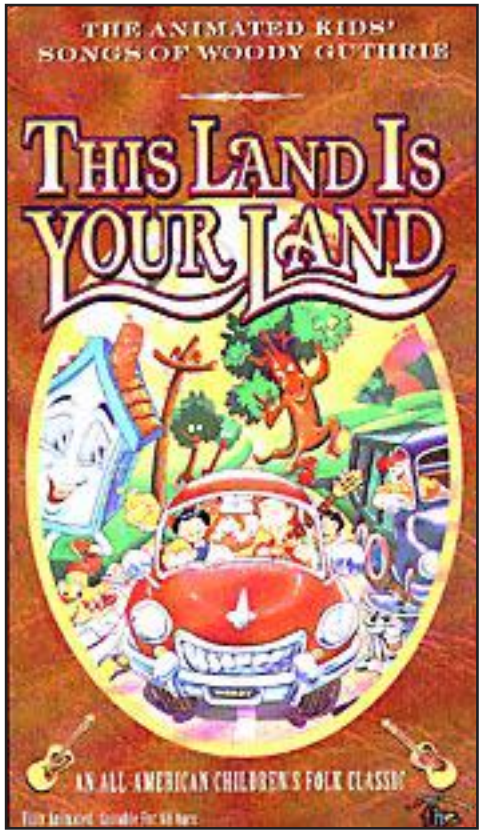
Read Rita Street's article about Rose Bond in the May 1996 issue of *Animation World Magazine.* http://www.awn.com/mag/issue1.2/articles1.2/streetbond1.2.html

A Celtic Trilogy is available on VHS for $29.95 (US) from Rose Bond Productions, P.O. Box 25756, Portland, OR 97298.

This Land is Your Land: The Animated Kids' Songs of Woody Guthrie

The classic American folk songs of singer/songwriter Woody Guthrie have been brought to life in a new direct-to-video production by Calico Entertainment. Illustrating children's songs performed by the artists' son, Arlo Guthrie, the tape is a 23 minute collection of seven animated "music videos." Each short is executed in a distinctly different visual style, from a look reminiscent of the 1930s "Golden Age" cartoons, to images inspired by Native American art. In the final number, all of the characters from the different sequences join together for a performance of "So Long, It's Been Good To Know Yuh."

This Land is Your Land: The Animated Kids' Songs of Woody Guthrie is available on VHS, retail for $12.98, distributed by Live Entertainment.



Wendy Jackson is Associate Editor of Animation World Magazine.

NEWS

June 1997 News

Compiled by Wendy Jackson

Business

Hollywood Shuffle. *Heather Kenyon has started as Editor-in-Chief of Animation World Magazine, replacing Harvey Deneroff. Kenyon joins AWM from a former post as manager of the production information department at Hanna-Barbera. . . . Superstar Disney animator Glen Keane has renewed his contract with Walt Disney Feature Animation, adding another 7 years to the 23-years he has already been with the studio. Keane will continue in his role as supervising animator, and is currently working at the Paris studio, supervising animation on the lead character in Tarzan . . . . Jeff Segal is leaving his post as a consultant on family/animated entertainment at The Bubble Factory, to head up TV, home video, and theatrical projects at Cloud Nine Interactive. Prior to that, Segal worked at Universal Cartoon Studios. . . . Ann Daly has resigned from her position as president of Buena Vista Home Video, where she has been for 14 years. It is rumored that she will head on to DreamWorks SKG's feature animation division. . . . Christine Panushka has announced plans to leave her faculty position in the experimental animation department at CalArts in order to head up the animation department at USC, starting in the Fall. . . .Jodi Nussbaum has been promoted to vice president of production at Children's Television Workshop, a role in which she will oversee production on shows such as Dragon Tales," Sesame Street and Cartoon Network's Big Bag. . . . Davis Doi has been promoted to supervising producer at Hanna Barbera.*

Nick Expands Into New L.A. Home. *As part of a five-year, $350 million investment into original animation, Nickelodeon will double its animation staff and increase space when the studio shifts its animation operations from Studio City to a brand new 72,000 square foot facility in Burbank. Described as a laboratory and playground for animators, the new facility will be capable of running up to five productions simultaneously, with 175 workstations, a recording facility / Foley soundstage, an archival animation library and an 80-seat theater. In addition, Mark Taylor, formerly vice president of animation production for Columbia/TriStar Television, has been named vice president and general manager of Nicktoons Animation. As Viacom head Sumner Redstone said in a recent keynote address at the World Animation Celebration, "the inmates will be running the asylum." And what an asylum it will be, with a basketball court, a gym, a signature green slime "Gak" fountain and an artist-designed miniature golf course. Nickelodeon's new facility, expected to open in early 1998, is being built on West Olive Street in Burbank.*

Calico/Wonderworks Alliance. *Chatsworth, California-based Calico Entertainment has recently expanded its digital effects division and formed a partnership with visual effects director Brick Price and his company, WonderWorks. The two companies will jointly provide concept and design, 2D and 3D animation, specialty sets, miniatures and computer motion control cinematography services. Together their work in digital effects will expand past their current lineup which includes six motion picture assignments and several TV projects. The group recently completed digital effects sequences for McHale's Navy, and Turbo, A Power Ranger Movie.*

Selick Options Mad Monkey Comic. *Henry Selick, the director of The Nightmare Before Christmas and James and the Giant Peach has acquired the film and television rights to Dark Town, a comic book published by Toronto-based Mad Monkey Press. Selick and his San Francisco-based Twitching Image production company are in talks with various studios about funding and distribution for a feature film,*

while Sam Hamm (who wrote the screenplay for the original Batman movie) is writing the screenplay. Based on the 13-issue Dark Town comic book series created by Mad Monkey president Kaja Blackley, and depicting the story of a man trapped between two worlds, the film is expected to be a combination of live-action and stop-motion animation, now a signature style for director Selick. Dark Town slipped mysteriously under my studio door and into my life as if it was meant to be," said Selick. "I've never felt that any project was closer to my sensibilities than this one." Comic creator Blackley is equally thrilled at the partnership, saying that "Henry Selick is the only person I would have entrusted Dark Town to. The fact that he came to me is even more flattering." Fans of stop-motion will find this news encouraging, as this is the first project announcement from Selick since his three-picture deal with Disney was broken after James and the Giant Peach.

DIC Invests In LST, France. *Disney-owned DIC Entertainment has put a major investment into a new Paris-based animation production company, Les Studios Tex (LST). Appointed to head up the operation is Daniel Schwall, who joins LST in addition to his responsibilities as CEO of Luxembourg-based animation studio Digit 352, which he co-founded. LST's first project with DIC will be 52 episodes of Tex Avery Theater, a co-production of DIC, French Telcima SA and broadcaster M6. "The presence of this new animation studio" said DIC president Andy Heyward "will enable DIC Entertainment to. . . . position DIC programming within France, whose European content regulations mandate that about one-third of a show's budget be allocated in France." DIC's interest in LST is about 40%, while the rest of the studio's capital comes from European investors.*

Meacham Road Studio Formed. *A new digital studio called Meacham Road Digital Studios, L.L.C. has been formed by teleproduction facility managers Scott Kane and Pat Saviano. Based in Schaumburg, Illinois (a suburb of Chicago,) the studio will handle computer graphics and 3D animation in addition to linear and non-linear digital editing, new media work groups, satellite uplinking and sound stages.*

Films

Nelvana and Trickcompany Co-Production. *German animation studio Trickcompany, and Canadian company Nelvana recently made an agreement at MIP TV to co-produce two animated feature films, riding on the success of their current co-production partnership of the Pippi Longstocking animated series for television. The films are both adaptations of existing properties. Babar is based on the classic French books and TV series, while Barbarella is based on none other than the 1968 live-action cult classic starring Jane Fonda. Nelvana is the rights holder to both properties, and is seeking additional partners for the project. Trickcompany has been making a name for itself with animated features such as Werner-Eat My Dust!!, and Little Asshole which grossed an impressive $31 million and $20 million, respectively, at the German boxoffice.*

NFBC Expanding Shadbolt Animation. *Touched Alive, Stephen Arthur's one-and-a-half minute animated film, made by animating the paintings of Canadian modernist painter Jack Shadbolt, is now being recreated in a longer form film produced by the National Film Board of Canada. The film was and will be created using digitally-scanned 2-D images of the paintings, animated in Autodesk Animator Pro.*

***Anastasia's* Coming Of Age.** *The bulk of animation production on Fox Feature Animation's debut effort, "Anastasia" is nearing completion, as was witnessed at a recent Los Angeles press screening and reception hosted by Twentieth Century Fox. The first 30 minutes of the film were screened in a compilation of animatics, pencil tests, fully rendered color sequences and CGI elements, synchronized to a completed soundtrack. The film's executive producer Maureen Donnelly emphasizes the importance of storytelling in this "contemporary fairy tale," which interprets the story of the legendary Russian princess, Anastasia Nikolavna, with the elements of family, attachment, separation and survival. "Anastasia" is scheduled to be released in November 97. Meanwhile, Fox's second feature animation project, "Planet Ice" is already in production, and directors Don Bluth and Gary Goldman will start on a third pro-*

ject (as yet unnamed) as soon as "Anastasia" is completed.

Television

MTV Renews *Daria.* *MTV will produce 26 new episodes of Daria, the network's original animated series spin-off from "Beavis and Butt-head." The series, which premiered in March, will continue to air on Monday nights at 10:30 p.m., with the aforementioned new episodes premiering in early 1998.*

Perennial Producing *Witches In Stitches.* *Indiana-based Perennial Pictures is beginning production on a half-hour animated Halloween special titled Witches in Stitches, which is described as a Three Stooges on brooms." The special is being produced in association with Anchor Bay Entertainment, who will distribute in home video and hold international television rights, while Sunbow Entertainment will handle domestic (U.S.) television distribution.*

Disney TV Offers Training Program. *Walt Disney Television Animation is seeking applicants for their new "Animation Directors Workshop," a new program to train animation timing directors. Up to ten animators will be selected for the ten month salaried positions, which are scheduled to begin in early June. Disney TV Animation senior vice president Tom Ruzicka said "With the volume of work now available, there hasn't been a corresponding increase in the number of qualified animation timing directors." With this program, the studio hopes to fill in the training gap to meet their staffing needs for their overseas productions. The intensive collection of workshops, lectures, screenings and classes will be overseen by Dan Smith, director of artist recruitment and training. For information about this program call (818) 754-7261.*

Perennial's*Witches in Stitches.*

Cow & Chicken On A Roll. *Cartoon Network has ordered an additional 13 half-hours of the Cow and Chicken animated series. The new episodes will air on the network in July, along with new episodes of Dexter's Laboratory, and the new series Johnny Bravo (not to be confused with "Jonny Quest.") Cow and Chicken was developed out of a World Premiere Toon produced by Hanna-Barbera and directed by David Feiss, who has just created another short titled I Am Weasel.*

Mondo & Carrere Making *Sleeping Beauty.* *Italian animation production company Mondo TV and French TV production group Carrere Group are co-producing a new 26-episode TV series based on the classic Sleeping Beauty fairy tale by Charles Perraut. The half hour episodes, slated for completion inn early 1998, are budgeted at $9 million for the whole series. The agreement was reached at MIP TV in Cannes last week.*

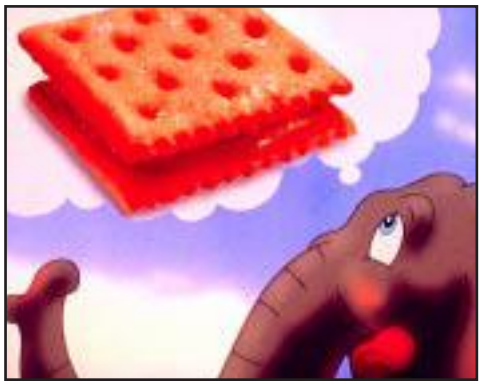
DIC Acquires Archie Rights. *DIC Entertainment has reached an agreement with Archie Comics to acquire animation production and worldwide licensing rights for the evergreen comic characters in the Archie Comics group. Archie, Jughead, Veronica and Betty will make a comeback in The Archie Mysteries, a half hour series designed for cable or network broadcast, rather than syndication. This is not the first adaptation of Archie for animation, The Archies was produced by Filmation in 1969. DIC president Andy Heyward says "They are a timeless group, and that's why they are still around after all this time." Meanwhile, no exploitation of this property is being overlooked, as Universal is developing a live action feature film based on the Archie property, while producers Barry and Fran Weissler are developing a Broadway musical, and there is even talk of a singing group revival.*

***Nightmare Ned* Premieres On ABC.** *Buena Vista Television's new animated series, Nightmare Ned premiered last week on ABC's Saturday morning lineup. The offbeat, colorful show is produced by Donovan Cook, creator of Two Stupid Dogs, a series on Cartoon network. Nightmare Ned will continue to air weekly at 10 a.m. ET and 11 a.m. PT on ABC.*

EM And ZDF To Make Tabaluga. *German production/merchandising company, EM Entertainment and public broadcaster ZDF are partnering to produce, license and distribute an animated series based on the existing German musical property of a cuddly dragon named Tabaluga. The 26 episode animated series will be packaged inside a live action/variety show modeled after The Mickey Mouse Club. Expectations are high for merchandising plans related to the program.*

Commercials

Flea Circus Gets Curious. *New York/San Francisco based Curious Pictures has signed on to their roster the talents of New Zealand-based animation director John Robertson and his studio Flea Circus Films, Ltd, which he founded in 1993. Relocating from Auckland to*



Designefx' *Tricky Elephant*.

Curious' San Francisco studio, Robertson recently completed a 45 second animated film featuring characters from Nickelodeon's Kablam! series, and he is currently getting started on a short "art film" for Cartoon Network's "Animate Your World" campaign. "I don't want to be limited to one medium," said Robertson, "I like to do collage, multi-planing, 3D. Curious has offered me an opportunity to expand my capabilities."

Tom & Jerry Play Tennis. *San Francisco-based animation studio Wild Brain and New York-based ad agency Warwick Baker O'Neill recently produced two commercials in association with the Tennis Industry Association and Cartoon Network, which feature classic animated characters Tom & Jerry playing tennis with live-action kids. Western Images used the Henry system to composite stock cartoon footage of Tom & Jerry with new green-screen live action footage.*

Designefx Gets Tricky. *Atlanta-based Designefx recently completed Tricky Elephant, a cel-animated commercial for Leslie Advertising's client, Lance Toastchee Peanut Crackers. In the 30 second spot, an animated zoo elephant performs tricks for a group of digitally-rotoscoped live actors, in an effort to get a taste of these peanut crackers. The animation director was David Strandquest.*

Curious Animates Cartoon Network's World. *Curious Pictures directors Steve Oakes and Dennis Morella recently completed the first three of their 12 spots for Cartoon Network's "Animate Your World" public service campaign. Designed to encourage creative thinking and imagination, the 30 second mixed media spots are Be a Vacuum Head,*

Curious Pictures' *Bob* spot for Cartoon Network.

encouraging people to open their minds and "suck up" everything they see, hear, smell and touch, and Put Your Brain on a Plane, depicting the virtues of daydreaming. A 60 second spot titled Bob uses stop motion to illustrate different perspectives on viewing the world around you. The spots featured the creative contributions of eclectic New York-based puppet/ performance artist Janie Geyser.

Blue Sky Does More Roach Clips. *A year after Blue Sky Studio's award-winning animation of roaches was featured in MTV/Paramount's feature film Joe's Apartment, the studio has been called upon once again to animate a cast of the creepy insects, this time for (what else?) a commercial for Combat Plus exterminating kits. Directed in the style of classic B-movies, the two 30 second spots, Big Problem and Big Foot feature computer animation composited over live-action.*

Manhattan Does Diapers. *New York-based production/editing facility, Manhattan Transfer recently completed animation for a 30 second commercial for Huggies brand diapers. Windmill, as the spot is titled, features live action composited with animated effects, created by senior animator Kevin Edwards, animator Keith Stichweh and parti-*

Blue Sky's *Combat Plus.*

cles systems animator Lidija Cukor.

Home Video

Manga To Release *Ghost* On DVD. *On July 7, Manga Entertainment will release Mamouru Oshii's hit Japanese animated feature film, Ghost in the Shell in the new Digital Video Disc (DVD) format. Touted as the first Japanese animated feature to be released in this format, the disc will include a 30 minute bonus program on the making of Ghost in the Shell, as well as picture files, character biographies and production notes. Manga will also release a "Special Edition" digitally remastered VHS version of the film in July.*

Manga To Release 2 New Anime Titles. *On May 20 and June 24, respectively, Manga Entertainment will release on home video Street Fighter II V (another in the popular series of video game-inspired Street Fighter TV episodes,) and Shadow Skill, director Hiroshi Negishi's martial arts adventure. Both are $24.95 retail.*

CPM Debuts 3 New Titles. *New York-based anime distributor Central Park Media will release three animated films on video in July: Patlabor: The Mobile Police-Volume 4, The Revenge of the Demon Beast, an erotic thriller by Urtsukidoji series creator Toshio Maeda, and Black Jack: Clinical Chart 2, by Japanese animation legend Osamu Tezuka, creator of Astro Boy. The titles will be available retail for $29.95 (Patlabor and Demon Beast) and $19.95 (Black Jack.)*

Disney's Jungle Crazy. *Following the release of Sleeping Beauty in September, Walt Disney Home Video has announced that they will release The Jungle Book from October 14-December 31, as part of the Disney Masterpieces collection. Jungle Book, Disney's 19th animated feature, is the last animated film that Walt Disney personally supervised. The timing of the Jungle Book release will enjoy riding the promotional wave of Disney's upcoming George of Jungle live-action re-make, and the recently released Jungle 2 Jungle with Tim Allen. Meanwhile, production is getting started on Tarzan, Disney's 37th animated feature. It's a jungle out there!*

Interactive & Internet

Fox Interactive Debuts Foxtoons Line. *In a bold move to buck the industry trend of low-volume unit sales, Fox Interactive has created FoxToons, a branded line of CD-ROM games offered at below-standard prices ($14.98 and less). Designed for children ages three to eight, and based on established literary properties, the dual-platform Windows/Macintosh CD-ROMS to be released in late May are Baby Felix Creativity Center, Hello Kitty Creativity Center, Danny the Dinosaur, and Frog and Toad are Friends.*

Theatrix Interactive Finds Sanctuary. *San Mateo, California-based Sanctuary Woods Multimedia Corporation announced that it will acquire all outstanding shares of privately-owned education software developer Theatrix Interactive. The terms of the agreement are yet to be announced.*

Macromedia Flash Sounds On. *Authoring software publisher*

Manhattan Transfer's *Windmill.*

Macromedia has released a second version of their vector-based web animation program, Flash 2.0 (formerly known as Future Splash Animator.) The upgrade, available for $99., offers full audio interactivity, which enables users to create synchronized sound tracks to their animations. Macromedia Flash was reviewed in the March issue of Animation World Magazine, online at http://www.awn.com/mag/issue1.12/toc1.12.html

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Sierra Gives Us The Shivers. *Washington-based Interactive software publisher Sierra On-line has released Shivers II: Harvest of Souls, a new CD-ROM for the teen and adult market. The mystery/adventure game features elaborate 3-D graphics and animation, as well as an extension to Sierra's Internet Gaming System (SIGS,) which enables users to interact and chat while playing the game. Shivers is available for $49.95 for Windows 95 and 3.1.*

Activision's Zork-A-Thon. *Activision has released The Zork Legacy Collection of CD-ROMS from their popular series. At a dramatically low price of $39.99, the package will include four CDs which include the games Zork Nemesis, Return to Zork, Zork Text Adventures I-III, Beyond Zork, Zork Zero, and a preview of the new Zork Grand Inquisitor.*

Humongous Peddles Putt-Putt Through Time. *Seattle-based Humongous Entertainment (now a subsidiary of GT Interactive) will release on June 1 the latest title in their Junior Adventure series of animated CD-ROM games for young children. Putt-Putt Travels Through Time is an educational game designed to interactively teach kids problem solving, memory, creativity and math skills. This game is available retail for $39.95 on Macintosh and Windows 95/3.1 formats.*

Disney Online's A Family Affair. *After investing a one-third interest in Starwave Corp. two weeks ago, Disney Online has announced that it will take over the online producer's Family Planet web site and incorporate it into their own Family.com web site. As they say, if you can't beat 'em, join 'em. . . . or, in Disney's case, acquire 'em!*

WB Renews With AOL. *Warner Bros. Online has renewed its contract with Internet content provider America Online, which will now include cross-promotional activities linking TV properties with their online counterparts. Kids WB programming will now feature promotions for the Kids WB AOL site.*

Technology

Curious' Steve Katz Develops Cyclops. *Steve Katz, director of digital production at Curious Pictures, has invented a real-time camera input device called Cyclops, which is now being manufactured by Digital Image Design (DID.) The product is a fluid-head tripod and LCD viewing system that drives the virtual camera in 3D animation systems such as Alias, Softimage, and 3D Studio Max, replicating traditional camera operation. Using the software's existing "layered" animation functions, Cyclops enables animators to create camera moves in real time (much like a live-action director would) within a previously animated 3D sequence.*

Hong Ying Licenses Pegs Software. *In a move to become the largest digital animation facility in China, Hong Ying Animation Co. ordered 50 SGI workstations and licensed MediaPegs' PEGS animation software. Currently the software is being used by Hong Ying in production work on 52 episodes of DIC's The Wacky World of Tex Avery animated series. In addition to being used for digital ink and paint, the PEGS software package is designed to facilitate communication between studios and overseas production facilities, tracking production progress and transmitting status reports via modem link.*

Festivals & Events

Virtual Humans Conference In June. *VR News and EDS will present a conference called Virtual Humans 2 at the Universal City Hilton in Los Angeles June 17-19. Sponsored by Silicon Graphics, the three-day conference is focused on exploring "the way virtual reality and humanoid technology are becoming part of our everyday lives, from the medical profession to the military to the entertainment industry." Events include presentations form experts in the field of 3D computer animation, motion capture, VRML and artificial life. For registration information, visit http://www.vrnews.com/vh2.html*

Comiccon San Diego. *The country's largest comic book convention, ComicCon International, will be held in San Diego July 17-20. Preceding the convention will be The Comic Book Expo, a conference for the exchange of ideas among professionals in the comics publishing,*

retail and creative industry. For information visit http://www.comic-con.org.

The Bradford Animation Festival. otherwise known as BAF, will take place June 6-12 at the National Museum of Photography, Film & Television in Bradford, England. Competition includes four categories: films by children (under 16,) by adult (professional,) adult (non-professional,) and experimental. Prizes have been donated by ASIFA and the festival's main sponsor, Royal Mail East. Additional programs include workshops, short film compilations, a special on "The Simpsons," and a retrospective of Ray Harryhausen, who will be present to host the closing night ceremony. BAF is the only annual film festival in Britain which is devoted to animation. For information on BAF, contact l.sutherland@nmsi.ac.uk or call ++ 44 1274-773399 (ext 274.)

Fantoche Festival Call For Entries. The second edition of the Fantoche International Festival of Animation is scheduled to take place in Baden, Switzerland, September 9-14. Planned programs include retrospectives of Piotr Dumala, Jerzy Kucia, Oksana Cherkassowa, Vera Neubauer and Kihachiro Kawamoto. Films made after January 1, 1995 are eligible for the competition, and the submission deadline is June 15. For entry forms and information, visit http://www.fantoche.ch

Williams Masterclass Sells Out, Adds Dates. All 150 registration spots have sold out in Richard Williams Masterclass which is being held in San Francisco June 6-8. A new class has been added June 20-22, to be held at the same location. For more information, visit the masterclass web page accessible from Animation World Magazine's May issue table of contents page. http://www.awn.com/mag

MOMI UK Workshops. The Museum of the Moving Image in London will present several children's workshops on animation and filmmaking during the month of May. As part of the Moving Magic Workshops held within the exhibition May 24-30, MOMI will teach children basic techniques of animation filmmaking and cartoon soundtrack making. This is featured in conjunction with the "Space Jam Showcase" exhibit featuring original production art from the Warner Bros. movie *Space Jam.*

Awards

British Academy Awards The 1996 British Academy Awards were recently presented by the British Academy of Film & Television Arts (BAFTA) in London. The award for Best Short Animated Film went to *The Old Lady and the Pigeons* by Bernard La Joie, Didier Brunner and Sylvian Chomet of France. Other nominees for this category were: *Testament: The Bible in Animation: Joseph* by Elizabeth Babakhina and Aida Ziablikoua, *Testament: The Bible in Animation: Moses* by Naomi Jones and Gary Hurst, *The Saint Inspector* by Richard Hutchinson and Mike Booth, *Trainspotter* by Christopher Moll, Jeff Newitt and Neville Astley and *Famous Fred,* by John Coates, Catrin Unwin and Joanna Quinn of Wales, which received the award for Best Children's Animation.

Oslo Animation Festival. The 4th International Oslo Animation Festival held in Norway last month featured screenings of 170 films. The jury included Pritt Parn, Phil Mulloy, Menno de Nooijer, Michaela Pavlatová, Georges Lacroix, and Tone Garmann. Prizes awarded were:

- Grand Prize: *Apricots* by Lotta and Uzi Geffenblad, Sweden.
- Audience Favorite: *Robin in the Dentist* by Magus Carlsson, Sweden.
- Best First Film: *Gravitation* by Prit Tender, Estonia.
- Best Use of Animation in a Commercial: *Four Commercials for P2* by Piotr Sagepin, Norway.
- Special Jury Prizes: *Otto* by Jonas Odell and Stig Bergquvist, Sweden and *Adventurepizza* by Eva Lindstrøm, Sweden.

TV Academy Awards Internship. For the fifth year in a row, a student of the University of the Arts in Philadelphia has won the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences (ATAS) Internship Award in Animation, a national competition based on video reels and drawn portfolios. This years winner, Matthew Faughnan, will fulfill an internship at Film Roman in North Hollywood. Previous winners from University of the Arts are all working in the animation industry now.

Betty Cohen To Be Honored By Promax. Betty Cohen, president of Cartoon Network Worldwide and TNT International will be presented with an award for "International Marketer of the Year" by PROMAX, the international association of promotional and marketing professionals in electronic media. The presentation will take place during the PROMAX & BDA Convention in Chicago, June 4-7.

On A Desert Island With. . . Educators!

Compiled by Wendy Jackson

This month professors from three leading animation schools answered the following question: "If you were stranded on a desert island with only ten films to screen to your students, to teach them the principles, techniques and concepts of the art of animation, what would they be?"

Jules Engel is director of California Institute of the Arts' Experimental Animation Program. Paul Driessen is head of the animation department at the University of Kassel in Germany. Eric Ubben is the animation course coordinator at the Kask Gent school in Belgium. In addition, all are independent filmmakers whose creations continue to teach principles of animation to more students than they will ever know.

Jules Engel's top ten:

1. *Band Concert* by Walt Disney.
2. *The Nose* by Alexander Alexeieff and Claire Parker.
3. *Two Sisters* by Caroline Leaf.
4. *Study no. 6* by Oskar Fischinger.
5. *Study no. 8* by Oskar Fischinger.
6. *Filter Gallery* by Erick Darnell.
7. *Tenderly* by John Hubley.
8. *The Trap* by Amy Kravitz.
9. *The Demon* by Kihachiro Kawamoto.
10. *Game of Angels* by Walerian Borowczyck.

(continues)

Paul Driessen's picks:

1. Satiemania by Zdenko Gasparovic, for its combination of abstraction and cartoon, inspired by the soundtrack.
2. Blinkety Blank by Norman McLaren. The power of abstinence.
3. Night on Bald Mountain by Alexander Alexeieff and Claire Parker, for the beauty of its inventive graphic technique.
4. Creature Comforts by Nick Park, for its amazing mimics and deadpan humor.

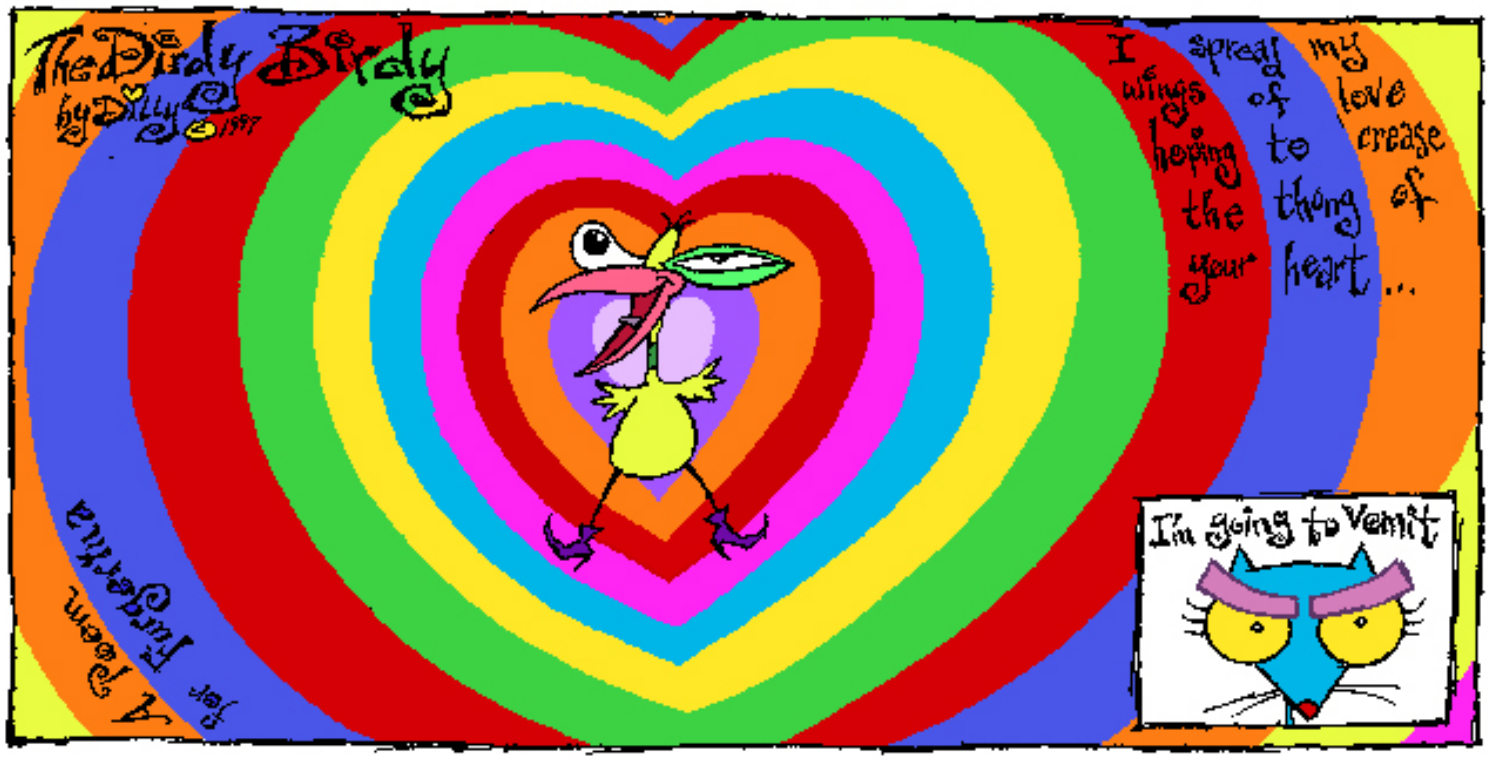
5. Revolver by Stig Bergquist and Jonas Odell. The graphics are close to my heart, and it has such wee-suited, minimal music.
6. La Traverse de l'Atlantic (Journey Across The Atlantic) by Francois Laguione, a master of cut-out atmosphere.
7. Furies by Sara Petty, for its beautifully captured movement. Madame love cubisme.
8. Broken Down Film by Osamu Tezuka. The best use of intentional errors.
9. Tempest (excerpts) by George Dunning. Stunning Dunning.
10. Some of my films, to share the concepts I came up with, mainly concerning perception, story structure and economy.

Eric Ubben's selections:

1. Tale of Tales by Yuri Norstein.
2. The Man Who Planted Trees by Frederic Back.
3. Hill Farm by Mark Baker.
4. Pinocchio by Walt Disney.

5. Street of Crocodiles by The Brothers Quay.
6. The complete works of Norman McLaren.
7. The Wrong Trousers by Nick Park.
8. Knick-Knack by John Lasseter.
9. State of the Art: Tate Gallery by D. Van de Vondel.
10. Little Wolf by An Vrombaut.

AWN Comics



The Dirdy Birdy by John R. Dilworth

Highlights from the July Issue…

The July 1997 issue of *Animation World Magazine* will delve into the world of comics. Naturally, the issue will contain an interview with Stan Lee by Mark Goldman. Other interviews with some of the hottest names in the business will also be included. We will hear from creators about their experiences as their properties went from the corner store to the small screen and beyond. Randy Lofficier will describe the *Perfect World* project for us and Sean Strebin will present an overview of current animated shows that have spawned from comic books. Philippe Moins will report on the status of comics in Europe. Concerns regarding distribution in the comic book industry, as well as important censorship issues will also be covered. Brian Camp will review of *The Complete Anime Guide*, and we will touch on the world of the Manga phenomenon in Japan. As usual, topic-related letters to the editor are welcomed at editor@awn.com.

Animation World Magazine 1997 Calendar

Computer Animation	*(August)*
Television	*(September)*
Licensing & Merchandising	*(October)*
Home Video	*(November)*